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THE ANATOMY OF A DIVISION: THE 1ST AUSTRALIAN DIVISION IN THE GREAT WAR, 1914–1919

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ORIGINALITY STATEMENT

'I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and to the best of my knowledge it contains no materials previously published or written by another person, or substantial proportions of material which have been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at UNSW or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis. Any contribution made to the research by others, with whom I have worked at UNSW or elsewhere, is explicitly acknowledged in the thesis. I also declare that the intellectual content of this thesis is the product of my own work, except to the extent that assistance from others in the project's design and conception or in style, presentation and linguistic expression is acknowledged.'

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Date 6 AUGUST 2010

ABSTRACT

The study of higher military organisations is a neglected theme in Australian studies of the Great War. Although the ‘digger’ looms large in national military historiography, the role of the larger organisations to which these soldiers belonged is often all but lost in the aura that surrounds the digger’s legendary battlefield performance.

This thesis examines the history of the 1st Australian Division during the Great War. This formation was the longest-serving Australian division during that conflict; more soldiers served in its ranks and it suffered more casualties than any equivalent Australian organisation. The study analyses how this division was raised, how it was organised and what it did during its service. Based on an analysis of its daily activities as recorded in its war diaries, the thesis identifies that the three activities the division spent most of its time engaged in were administration, training and operations—devoting about a quarter of its time to various types of administrative activity; another quarter training; and only half of its time committed to operations with the enemy. It suggests that the success of the division on the battlefield depended on the capacity of its commanders and staff to administer, train and adapt to the changing conditions they experienced and less on the innate qualities of the division’s soldiers. It embraces the following:

Pre-war expeditionary force plans and the mobilisation of the 1st Division.

The organisation of the 1st Division and how it adapted.

The administrative system and how this sustained the division.

The development of the divisional training system.

The division’s first operations on Gallipoli and why they failed.

The development of divisional defensive and offensive operations on the Western Front.

Demobilisation and the repatriation of the division’s veterans.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOSSARY

AA	*Army Act*
AAMC	Australian Army Medical Corps
AAOC	Australian Army Ordnance Corps
AAQMG	Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General
AASC	Australian Army Service Corps
AAVC	Australian Army Veterinary Corps
ACF	Australian Comforts Fund
ADB	*Australian Dictionary of Biography*
ADC	Aide-de-Camp
Admin	Administration/Administrative
ADMS	Assistant Director Medical Services
ADVS	Assistant Director Veterinary Services
AG	Adjutant General Staff
AHQ	Army Headquarters
AIF	Australian Imperial Force
AIFO	*Australian Imperial Force Orders*
AN&MEF	Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force
ANZAC	Australian and New Zealand Army Corps
AOH	*Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*
AOHMS	*Official History of the Australian Medical Services in the War of 1914–1918*
APM	Assistant Provost Marshal
Aust	Australia/Australian
AWM	Australian War Memorial
AWOL	Absent Without Leave
BAC	Brigade Ammunition Column
Bde	Brigade
BEF	British Expeditionary Force
BGGS	Brigadier General, General Staff
BIO	Brigade Intelligence Officer
BL	Breech-Loading
BM	Brigade Major

BMRA	Brigade Major, Royal Artillery
Bn	Battalion
BOH	*History of Britain in the Great War*
BOHMS	*Official History of the British Medical Services in the Great War*
Bty	Battery
CAG	*Commonwealth of Australia Gazette*
CB	Companion of the Order of the Bath
CBE	Commander of the Order of the British Empire
CDA	Commander Divisional Artillery
CDE	Commander Divisional Engineers
CE	Chief Engineer
CEF	Canadian Expeditionary Force
CGS	Chief of the General Staff
CMG	Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George
CMJ	*Commonwealth Military Journal*
CMP	Corps of Military Police
COA	Commonwealth of Australia
Comd	Command/Commander
Coy	Company
CPP	*Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers*
CQMS	Company Quartermaster Sergeant
CRA	Commander Royal Artillery
CRE	Commander Royal Engineers
DAQMG	Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General
DAAQMG	Deputy Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General
DAAG	Deputy Assistant Adjutant General
DAC	Divisional Ammunition Column
DADMS	Deputy Assistant Director Medical Services
DADOS	Deputy Assistant Director Ordnance Services
DADVS	Deputy Assistant Director Veterinary Services
DAQMG	Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General
DCM	Distinguished Conduct Medal
DDMS	Deputy Director Medical Services

DDOS	Deputy Director Ordnance Services
DDVS	Deputy Director Veterinary Services
DGP	Died of Gas Poisoning
DHQ	Divisional Headquarters
Div	Division
DMA	Director of Military Art
DMS	Director Medical Services
DMT	Director of Military Training
DOC	Died of Other Causes
DOD	Died of Disease
DOW	Died of Wounds
DQMG	Deputy Quartermaster General
DSM	Distinguished Service Medal
DSO	Companion of the Distinguished Service Order
DTMO	Divisional Trench Mortar Officer
ed/edn	Editor/Edition
FA	Field Artillery
Fd	Field
FGCM	Field General Courts-Martial
fn	Footnote
FOO	Forward Observation Officer
FP	Field Punishment
FSPB	*Field Service Pocket Book*
FSR	Field Service Regulations
GCB	Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath
GCBE	Grand Commander of the British Empire
GCM	General Courts-Martial
GCMG	Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St Michael and St George
GHQ	General Headquarters
GMP	Garrison Military Police
GOC	General Officer Commanding
GOC AIF	General Officer Commanding the Australian Imperial Force
GOCRA	General Officer Commanding Royal Artillery

GS	General Service
GS	General Staff
GSO	General Staff Officer
GSO1	General Staff Officer Grade One
GSO2	General Staff Officer Grade Two
GSO3	General Staff Officer Grade Three
HE	High Explosive
HMS	His Majesty's Ship
HMAS	His Majesty's Australian Ship
HMAT	His Majesty's Australian Transport
HMSO	His Majesty's Stationery Office
HQ	Headquarters
HTM	Heavy Trench Mortar
IBD	Infantry Base Depot
IG	Inspector General
IHL	Imprisonment with Hard Labour
Inf	Infantry
IWM	Imperial War Museum
JAG	Judge Advocate General
KBE	Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire
KCB	Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath
KCMG	Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George
KG	Knight of the Order of the Garter
KIA	Killed in Action
LHCMA	Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives
LH	Light Horse
LO	Liaison Officer
L of C	Line/s of Communication
LTM	Light Trench Mortar
MA	Master of Arts
MBE	Member of the Order of the British Empire
MC	Military Cross
MD	Military District

MDS	Main Dressing Station
MEF	Mediterranean Expeditionary Force
MFP	Military Foot Police
MG	Machine-Gun
MGGS	Major General, General Staff
MGRA	Major General, Royal Artillery
MIA	Missing In Action
MID	Mentioned in Dispatches
MM	Military Medal
MMG	Medium Machine-Gun
MMP	Military Mounted Police
MP	Member of Parliament
MSM	Meritorious Service Medal
MTM	Medium Trench Mortar
MVS	Mobile Veterinary Section
NAA	National Archives Australia
NCO	Non Commissioned Officer
nd	no date of publication
NLA	National Library of Australia
NME	Non Military Education
np	no place of publication
NZ	New Zealand
NZ&A	New Zealand and Australian
NZEF	New Zealand Expeditionary Force
OBE	Officer of the Order of the British Empire
OO	Orderly Officer
OOB	*Order of Battle of Divisions*
OP	Observation Post
Ops	Operations
OR	Other Ranks
OTB	Overseas Training Brigade
PD	*Parliamentary Debates*
pdr	Pounder

PE	Peace Establishment
PMG	Post-Master General
PMO	Principal Medical Officer
Pnr	Pioneer
PW	Prisoner of War
PRO	Public Records Office, London
psc	passed staff college
QF	Quick-Firing
QM	Quartermaster
QMG	Quartermaster General
QMGS	Quartermaster General Staff
RA	Royal Artillery
RAA	Royal Australian Artillery
RAE	Royal Australian Engineers
RAFA	Royal Australian Field Artillery
RAGA	Royal Australian Garrison Artillery
RAP	Regimental Aid Post
RE	Royal Engineers
Regt	Regiment/Regimental
RFA	Royal Field Artillery
RGA	Royal Garrison Artillery
RHA	Royal Horse Artillery
RMC-A	The Royal Military College of Australia
RMO	Regimental Medical Officer
RN	Royal Navy
RO	Routine Order
rpg	rounds per gun
SAA	Small Arms Ammunition
SC	Senior Staff Course qualified
sc	Junior Staff Course qualified
SC	Staff Captain
SCRA	Staff Captain, Royal Artillery
SIW	Self-Inflicted Wound

SLNSW	State Library of New South Wales
SLV	State Library of Victoria
SMH	*Sydney Morning Herald*
SMLE	Short Magazine Lee Enfield
SS	Stationery Service
TM	Trench Mortar
UK	United Kingdom
UNSW	University of New South Wales
VC	Victoria Cross
VD	Volunteer Officers' Decoration
WD	War Diary
WE	War Establishment
WIA	Wounded in Action
WO	War Office
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

MEASUREMENTS

Length	1 inch (in)	25.4 millimetres (mm)
	1 foot (ft)	0.305 metres (m)
	1 yard (yd)	0.91 metres (m)
	1 mile	1.61 kilometres (km)
Weight	1 pound (lb)	0.45 kilograms (kg)
	14 lb = 1 stone	6.35 kg
Liquid	1 pint	0.56 litre (lt)
Area	1 acre	0.4 hectare
Currency	12 pence (d) = 1 shilling (s)	10 cents
	20 s = 1 pound (£)	$2
	100 centimes = 1 French Franc (FRF)	
Temperature	100 ºFahrenheit	37.8 ºCelsius

BRITISH MILITARY RANKS

Rank	Employment
Commissioned Officers	
Field Marshal (FM)	
General (Gen)	Army commander
Lieutenant General (Lt Gen)	Corps commander
Major General (Maj Gen)	Divisional commander
Brigadier General (Brig Gen)	Infantry brigade commander from 1915
Colonel (Col)	Infantry brigade commander in 1914
Lieutenant Colonel (Lt Col)	Unit Commanding Officer (CO)
Major (Maj)	Unit Second-in-Command (2iC)
Captain (Capt)	Sub-unit Officer Commanding (OC)
Lieutenant (Lt)/Second Lieutenant (2Lt)	Infantry platoon, light horse troop or artillery section commander
Warrant Officers (WO) and Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO)	
WO Class One (WOI)	Unit Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM)
WO Class Two (WOII)	Company, Squadron or Battery Sergeant Major (CSM, SSM or BSM)
Staff Sergeant (SSgt)	
Sergeant (Sgt)	Platoon sergeant
Corporal (Cpl)	Section commander
Lance Corporal (LCpl)	
Enlisted	
Private (Pte)	

INTRODUCTION

'The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there,' thus LP Hartley as a traveller from a far-off shore, sadly viewed his vanished world before 1914 and so eloquently described the relationship between those trying to understand people and events of the past.[1] The Great War (1914–18)—or as it came to be known World War I—is indeed a foreign land to those living in the twenty-first century.[2] On one hand most Australians would claim to know something of that cataclysmic event: the naïve enthusiasm for war, the unprecedented slaughter on Gallipoli and the Western Front, the unforgivable incompetence of the generals and their callous staffs, only counterbalanced by the natural abilities of the larrikin Australian 'digger'. On the other hand nearly a century has passed since the beginning of the Great War, all of the Australian participants are dead, and the reasons why thousands of men and women willingly went to war (and stayed there) is quite incomprehensible to the contemporary generation. It is not that we have not experienced war since; rather, that the Great War set the tone for what has followed, giving rise to so much that is truly modern albeit in the process becoming a foreign land for all of its apparent familiarity.[3]

The Great War continues to cast a long shadow over Australian culture and the way Australians see themselves. Despite, or perhaps in part because of Charles Bean's monumental study of Australia's role in the Great War, myths continue to prevail over reality.[4] To many Australians it still constitutes 'the

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[1] LP Hartley, *The Go-Between*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1953, p 9.

[2] For the British Empire the war officially began when Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914 and hostilities ceased with the Armistice on 11 November 1918. The war did not officially end until 31 August 1921 and so its official duration is seven years and 21 days.

[3] See: Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990; and Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring: the Great War and the birth of the Modern Age*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1989.

[4] CEW Bean authored six of the 12 volume series *The History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, with his volumes covering Gallipoli (volumes I and II) and the Western Front (volumes III to VI) (hereafter referred to as Bean, *AOH*). In addition there was a separate three-volume series *The Official History of the Australian Medical Services in the War of 1914–1918*, authored by Arthur G Butler (hereafter referred to as Butler, *AOHMS*).

prime example of war as horror and futility'.[5] Alongside this revulsion however, lays a fascination and pride in the achievements of the fledgling nation and the birth of the digger legend, giving rise to an industry of cinema and literature eulogising the common soldier. In all just over 330,000 diggers served overseas during the Great War and they represent one of the essential Australian archetypes. In the 'mind's eye' of the average Australian these superb fighters were as remarkable as they were unique. This study explores the collective experience of some 80,000 Australian Imperial Force (AIF) soldiers but it does so by focussing less on the individuals and more on the institution to which they belonged.

From the Napoleonic wars onwards the 'division' became a standard feature in European military forces. By the eve of the Great War all European armies had adopted the division as their basic building block and an army was measured by the number of divisions it could field. When the nations of western Europe went to war in 1914 they mobilised their vast ranks—France with 60 infantry and ten cavalry divisions; Germany with 78 infantry and ten cavalry divisions, tiny Belgium with six infantry and one cavalry division; and Britain's 'contemptibly little' contribution of another six infantry and one cavalry division.[6] These divisions were what Great War historian Cyril Falls calls the real 'unit' of the war.[7]

A 'division' is the largest formation in Western armies to have a fixed organisation. Above the division, the higher organisations of the 'corps' and

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[5] Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson, 'The First World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol 35, No 2 (April 2000) pp 319–328.

[6] Brig Gen Sir John E Edmonds (ed), *History of the Great War: Military Operations, France and Belgium*, 1914 Vol I, Macmillan and Co, London, 1928, pp 7, 15–16, 18, 432–433 and 438–439 (hereafter referred to as *BOH*). Edmonds gives slightly different figures in a later account stating that on mobilisation the Entente forces deployed 199 divisions, which included the forces of Belgium with six infantry and one cavalry division; Britain with six infantry and one cavalry division; France with 62 infantry and ten cavalry divisions; Russia with 114 infantry and 36 cavalry divisions; and Serbia with 11 infantry and one cavalry division. Confronting the allies were 136 divisions belonging to Germany, with 87 infantry and 11 cavalry divisions, and Austria with 49 infantry and 11 cavalry divisions. John E Edmonds, *A Short History of World War I*, Greenwood Press, New York, 1968, pp 9–10.

[7] Cyril Falls, *War Books: An Annotated Bibliography of Books About the Great War*, Greenhill Books, London, 1989, p xiv.

'army' have flexible structures with their organisation being tailored to meet a particular task or conduct some specific campaign. Below the division the brigades and other direct command units have fixed organisations and they comprise one main type of military specialist and as such have limited roles and capacity. In contrast the division has a fixed organisation while it combines the full range of fighting arms and support services allowing it to conduct a variety of missions and in industrial-age armies it was the division that was the main instrument of battle. In 1914 armies maintained two types of division: infantry and cavalry. The cavalry was still regarded as the arm of decision; it was the 'eyes' of the army protecting its front and flanks, and after the enemy's defeat the cavalry was to pursue and complete the victory. The task of actually defeating the enemy on the battlefield belonged to the infantry.[8]

The 1914-era British infantry division was a large and complex organisation. It consisted of about 18,000 men and more than 5000 horses, organised into some 20 different units ranging in strength from 500 up to about 1000 men. In addition to the thousands of modern, smokeless powder rifles, the division was equipped with its own machine-guns and artillery. It also had its own construction engineers and internal communications. The division maintained an administrative tail of supply, ordnance, police, medical and veterinary units. These organisations watered, fed, clothed, bathed, armed, disciplined, rewarded, paid and cared for all its personnel and animals. The commander and his small supporting staff were also responsible for training this disparate organisation, forging a team that could weather the white heat of battle. As a microcosm of an army and its principal instrument of battle, the division is an ideal vehicle for examining just what transpired on the battlefields of the Great War and how particular armies adapted to the challenges of industrial warfare.[9]

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[8] For the development of the British cavalry before and during the Great War see: Stephen Badsey, *Doctrine and Reform in the British Cavalry 1880–1918*, Ashgate Publishing, Aldershot, 2008.

[9] For an introduction to the British infantry divisions see: Martin Middlebrook, *Your Country Needs You: From Six to Sixty-Five Divisions*, Sword and Pen Books, Barnsley, 2000, pp 9–12.

Britain began the Great War with a modest expeditionary force of just seven divisions drawn from its all-volunteer army of 245,000. By the end of the war the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) had grown into an army of more than a million men of 60 active divisions. This expansion was mirrored in each of the self-governing dominions of the British Empire. The Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) grew from a single division to a four-division corps; while the New Zealand Expeditionary Force (NZEF) expanded from two infantry brigades to a full division; and Australia's first contingent of a single division would eventually grow to a corps of five infantry divisions.[10]

Those five divisions were Australia's prime contribution to the defeat of the Triple Alliance. Surprisingly, only one of the divisions has a formation history devoted to its Great War service. Even in the 1930s this phenomenon caused one ex-digger to note that the 'Most remarkable feature of the dearth of AIF unit histories is that of the divisions; the 5th has been the only one heard of so far'[11] and the 5th Australian Division's history was published in 1920.[12] The next divisional history to be published was Al Palazzo's wide-ranging 2002 history of the 3rd Division; although this division did not see action in France until half way through the war and his study spanned 75 years from 1916 to 1991.[13] Two years later the 1st Division's 90-year history was explored in a brief publication although its Great War service was covered in just eight pages.[14]

In contrast the British divisions of the Great War are much better served, at least with regard to quantity. The British Army raised 90 or so divisions during the war and more than half of the infantry divisions have been the subjects of a

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[10] The AIF would eventually field a force of nearly seven divisions. Besides the five infantry divisions the equivalent of almost two mounted (light horse) divisions served in the Middle East, while a sixth infantry division was partially formed in Britain in March 1917 only to be disbanded in September of that year due to manpower shortages. Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, p 184.

[11] 'Battalion Histories: Plea to Governments', *The Reveille*, Vol 3, No 5 (31 January 1930) p 5.

[12] Capt MC Ellis, *The Story of the Fifth Australian Division*, Hodder and Stoughton Limited, London, 1920.

[13] Albert Palazzo, *Defenders of Australia: The Third Australian Division*, Australian Military History Publications, Loftus, 2002.

[14] Yvonne 'Inky' Mionnet, *History of the 1st Division: From Gallipoli to Brisbane 5 August 1914 to 5 August 2004*, Yvonne Mionnet, Enoggera, nd, pp 1–8.

published history.[15] Some of these works are excellent studies, having being written by historians of the calibre of Cyril Falls, although many are little more than sketchy anecdotal accounts of the doings of their particular organisation. This is not surprising since most were published in the decades immediately following the war and their intended market was the surviving veterans and their families.[16]

It is a mixed story for the other British Empire contingents. While the New Zealand Division can claim to have been the subject of three histories, the first of these was a lengthy study published in 1921 as part of the NZEF official history series, the second is less a divisional history than a history of the NZEF's service on Gallipoli and the Western Front published in 1935, and the third is another generalised history published in 2005.[17] Other recent studies have added considerable texture to the story of Andrew Russell's fine division however, these works explore particular campaigns, battles or aspects of the NZEF story rather than 'The Silent Division' as an organisation.[18] The Canadians on the other hand have been poorly served. Up until 2006, when Kenneth Radley's history of the 1st Canadian Division was published, none of the four Canadian divisions that saw active service had a published history.[19]

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[15] British divisions during the Great War were constituted as follows: 15 regular (including three cavalry); 34 Territorial Force (including six cavalry titled Yeomanry); 36 New Army (six of which were broken up in 1915); and five others, which included the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division, three home service divisions and a mixed British/Indian division. Of these, 69 divisions served in theatres of war, three Territorial divisions were sent to garrison India and 18 never left Britain.

[16] Middlebrook, *Your Country Needs You*, pp 23–132; and RHS Spaight, *British Army Divisions in the Great War 1914–1918: A Checklist*, Robin Spaight, Richmond, 1978. Most of the British divisional histories have recently been republished by the Naval and Military Press in Britain.

[17] Col Hugh Stewart, *The New Zealand Division 1916–1919: A Popular History Based on Official Records*, Witcombe and Toms, Auckland, 1921; OE Burton, *The Silent Division: New Zealanders at the Front, 1914–1919*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1935; and Matthew Wright, *Western Front: The New Zealand Division in the First World War, 1916–1918*, Raupo Publishing, Auckland, 2005.

[18] Examples of the recent New Zealand scholarship on the NZEF include: Christopher Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell: New Zealanders and Military Discipline in the First World War*, Hodder and Stoughton, Auckland, 1991; Christopher Pugsley, *Gallipoli: The New Zealand Story*, Hodder and Stoughton, Auckland, 1990; and Glyn Harper, *Dark Journey: three key New Zealand battles of the Western Front*, HarperCollins *Publishers (New Zealand)*, Auckland, 2007.

[19] Kenneth Radley, 'First Canadian Division, CEF, 1914–1918: Ducimus (we lead)', PhD thesis, Carleton University, 2000; and Kenneth Radley, *We Lead Other Follow: First Canadian Division*

Like the New Zealanders, a steady steam of other studies has been produced in recent times although these too focus on the CEF as a whole rather than their divisional organisations.[20]

What most of the published divisional histories—British and old dominion—share in common is that they are narrative in style, generally strong on description and weak on analysis. Radley's study is one of the few exceptions as that author explores in detail the maturation of the 1st Canadian Division, focussing on the development its command system, the divisional staff and the training of the division. Peter Simkins' short study of the 18th (Eastern) Division is another exception and while he was writing more than a decade ago, his observation that there was 'the need for a more systematic examination of divisional organisation, composition and performance in the BEF' remains just as valid today.[21] Even though other recent unpublished studies have also explored the experiences of particular British divisions, most of these focus on training or battlefield development rather than a broader and more balanced view of the divisional experience.[22] Thus, the combination of the division's historical significance, its neglected historiography and Australian indifference demanded a new approach.

1914–1918, Vanwell Publishing Limited, St Catharines, 2006. Also see: Andrew Iarocci, Andrew, *Shoestring soldiers: The 1st Canadian Division at war, 1914–1915*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2008.

[20] Examples of the recent Canadian scholarship on the CEF include: Bill Rawling, *Surviving Trench Warfare: Technology and the Canadian Corps 1914–1918*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1992; Desmond Morton, *When Your Number's Up, the Canadian Soldier in the First World War*, Random House of Canada, Toronto, 1993; Tim Cook, *At the Sharp End: Canadians Fighting the Great War 1914–1918*, Volume One, Viking Canada, Toronto, 2007; and Tim Cook, *Shock Troops: Canadians Fighting the Great War 1914–1918*, Volume Two, Viking Canada, Toronto, 2008.

[21] Peter Simkins, 'The War Experience of a Typical Kitchener Division: The 18th Division, 1914–1918', in Hugh Cecil and Peter H Liddle (eds), *Facing Armageddon: The First World War Experienced*, Leo Cooper, London, 1996, p 297.

[22] While a number of unpublished studies have shed new light on the development of doctrine, training and tactical proficiency and their place in the 'learning curve' of the BEF, none fully explore all aspects of division's story. For example see: William Stewart, 'Attack Doctrine in the Canadian Corps, 1916–1918', MA thesis, University of New Brunswick, 1982; Kathryn Louise Snowden, 'British 21st Infantry Division on the Western Front 1914–1918: A Case Study in Tactical Evolution', MPhil Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2001; Matthew J Brosnan, 'The Tactical Development of the 56th (London) Division on the Western Front, 1916–18', MPhil (B) Thesis, University of Birmingham, 2005; and Mark N Cook, 'Evaluating the learning curve: The 38th (Welsh) Division on the Western Front 1916–1918', MPhil, University of Birmingham, 2005.

This thesis examines the senior of the AIF's infantry divisions—the 1st Australian Division. It was chosen because it does not have a history and it was the *first* division raised by Australia in the Great War, indeed the first division that Australia had ever raised; and it was the only Australian divisional sized formation that served throughout the war from beginning to end. It was the 1st Division that led the way ashore at Gallipoli, it seized and held Lone Pine, it achieved the AIF's first victory on the Western Front at Pozières, and it was still serving with distinction in the final battles that defeated the German Army in 1918. It suffered more casualties and more diggers passed through its ranks than any other Australian division. In many respects the 1st Division's history is the history of the AIF.

To explore the unexplored this thesis sets out to answer one question—what did this division do during the Great War? To answer this deceptively simple query a narrative style was deemed inappropriate because this traditional path tends to become overly focussed on battles, with only limited reference to the periods in between. Many battles however, are decided even before the first shot is fired and so this study seeks to take a deeper look at the inner workings of that vast, complex and evolving organisation on and off the battlefield. At its core is an examination of what the 1st Division did over its four-and-a-half years of service. This is based on an analysis of how it was raised, organised and equipped, how it functioned, and most importantly what particular activities it performed. Such an approach lends itself to a thematic style, so that each of the activities can be treated in a more balanced and holistic manner. This is a unique approach not previously undertaken in the study of any Great War division. Because of its scope however, the thesis is not a comparative study. While comparing the 1st Division's experience with other British Empire divisions would be illuminating, to make meaningful comparisons would require a completely different thesis. This undoubtedly useful work awaits another.

Structurally the thesis is divided into eight chapters. The first chapter explores the genesis of the 1st Division by reviewing the state of planning in Australia for the raising of an expeditionary force to support Britain in the event of war. Having examined the pre-war contingency plans it reviews their implementation through the process of mobilisation and how these plans brought the 1st

Division into existence. This should answer the question as to how well Australia was prepared to raise such a formation.

Chapter Two examines the raw material of the division—its officers, soldiers and equipment—when placed within the organisations they joined and that in a collective sense made-up the division's anatomy. This chapter, while largely descriptive, explores what elements comprised the division, how they functioned and how the organisational 'fit' of the division was modified to accommodate new weapon systems, equipment, procedures and tactics. This chapter sets the scene for those that follow and examines how the anatomy functioned on a day-to-day basis and how it adapted to the challenges of war.

Chapter Three is the first of the chapters to explore the three key activities that occupied the division's time. It focuses on administration and its influence on the performance of the division both in and out of the line. It seeks to explore the many facets of military administration as practiced by the 1st Division, to determine how much time the division spent on particular administrative activities and what role this played in the 1st Division's battlefield performance.

Chapter Four explores the second key activity—training. This chapter seeks to answer pertinent questions such as: what impact did pre-war training and doctrine have on the raising of the division; what training activities were undertaken prior to Gallipoli and how effective were they; what training did the division undertake during the Gallipoli campaign and why; and how was the training conducted on the Western Front different from earlier training regimes? In answering these questions an assessment will be made as to effectiveness of doctrine and training and what impact this had on battlefield performance.

Chapters Five, Six and Seven examine the 1st Division's third and most important activity—operations. The division's first operations on the Gallipoli Peninsula are covered in Chapter Five, while the defensive and offensive operations on the Western Front are explored separately in Chapters Six and Seven. The reason for this unusual separation stems from the nature of the BEF and the varying quality of its divisions. Most contemporary observers and later historians assess that the BEF's divisions fell into three broad categories:

those that were nearly always reliable and were called upon for important tasks; those that were more variable but could usually be trusted; and those that were more or less untrustworthy and were only relied upon to hold the line.[23] While most divisions proved capable of holding the line on the defensive, fewer, perhaps only a third or so could be relied upon to perform effectively in the increasingly complex offensive operations that characterised the BEF in the latter years of the war. Those divisions that proved reliable were called upon again and again, with a few eventually attaining a status as the BEF's elite, and qualifying them for repeated use as the spearhead of the army in the later campaigns of 1917 and 1918. Divisional status was a fickle mistress however, and it could and did change—sometimes for the better and sometimes for the worse. Here it is important to assess the success and failures of the 1st Division, what factors influenced these and if its status changed during the war.

Chapter Eight explores the disbandment of the 1st Division and the return of its veterans to Australia following the Armistice. This chapter is brief and essentially descriptive.

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[23] Just which were the elite divisions of the BEF is a matter of debate. Paddy Griffith and Peter Simkins have conducted extensive research on the relative merits of British divisions on the Western Front and from their research, which is supported by anecdotal, contemporary evidence by members of the BEF, there appears to have been somewhere around one-third of the infantry divisions that might be regarded as above the average. This list, at different times, might include: the regular 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 7th, 29th and Guards divisions; the New Army 9th (Scottish), 11th (Northern), 14th (Light), 15th (Scottish), 18th (Eastern), 19th (Western), 21st, 30th, 33rd and 36th (Ulster) divisions; the Territorial Force 47th (2nd London) and 51st (Highland) divisions; the 63rd (Royal Naval) Division; the five Australian divisions; the four Canadian divisions; and the New Zealand Division. In 1918 the 46th (North Midland) Division might also claim membership to this group based exclusively on its achievement in breaching the Hindenburg Line, while the 56th (1st London) Division may also lay claim to be 'a great fighting division' due to its performance at Cambrai in 1917 and at Arras in 1918. Claims have also been advanced for the 34th and 38th (Welsh) divisions in 100-day campaign of 1918. As this list includes 34 of the BEF's 60 infantry divisions, it is clear that divisional status was and is a matter of interpretation and largely subjective. Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Western Front: The British Army's Art of Attack, 1916–18*, Yale University Press, London, 1994, pp 79–83; Peter Simkins, 'Co-stars or Supporting Cast? British Divisions in the "100 Days", 1918', in Paddy Griffith (ed), *British Fighting Methods in the Great War*, Frank Cass, London, 1996, pp 50–69; Gary Sheffield, 'Finest hour? British forces on the Western Front: An overview', in Ashley Ekins, *1918 year of victory: the end of the Great War and the shaping of history*, Exisle, Auckland, 2010, pp 60 and 63; Robert Graves, *Good-Bye To All That*, Guild Publishing, London, 1979, pp 152 and 161; and Brosnan, 'The Tactical Development of the 56th (London) Division on the Western Front, 1916–18', pp 132–135.

Finally a note of caution. The thesis is based on an analysis of the daily activities of the 1st Division as recorded in its war diaries. The division maintained two divisional war diaries, one by the general staff focussing on operations and the other maintained by the administrative staff, which focussed on personnel and logistics matters.[24] In examining these diaries, and then comparing them to those of the division's superior headquarters, its subordinate units and to secondary sources such as Bean's *History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, it was possible to make an assessment as to what particular key activity the division was undertaking on any given day.[25] It is however, an approach with limitations. The division, with its 18,000 men and 20 different units could and did undertake myriad activities at the same time. Allocating one specific activity to a particular day required a judgment to be made and this was based on what appeared to be the main effort of the division on that day. One the other hand, a day allocated to 'operations' does not mean that 'administration' or 'training' activities were not taking place and indeed different units were undoubtedly engaged in every type of activity. In the end, an assessment had to be made and by concentrating on what the infantry were doing—they being the largest and most important element of the division—and applying a consistent approach it is hoped that errors have been minimised. In doing so I have attempted to suppress my biases and not rely on personal experience except where I believe it supports 'inherent military probability' rather than the wishful thinking and histrionics that often seems to shape popular notions of what happened during the Great War.[26]

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[24] Copies of the AIF's war diaries are held at the Australian War Memorial (AWM), Canberra and in the British National Archives at the Public Records Office (PRO) at Kew, London. The data used in this thesis is based on the two divisional war diaries: General Staff, Headquarters 1st Australian Division (GS HQ 1st Aust Div), War Diary, August 1914–March 1919, AWM4, items 1/42/1–1/42/50; and Administrative Staff, Headquarters 1st Australian Division (Admin Staff HQ 1st Aust Div), War Diary, August 1914–May 1919, AWM4, items 1/43/1–1/43/52.

[25] A list of the divisional activities employed in this study is attached at annex A and the summary of 1st Division's activities is at annex B.

[26] The term 'inherent military probability' was coined by Alfred Burne, the noted military historian in his study *The Agincourt War*. The term was also used by Sir Michael Howard in his influential article on 'The Use and Abuse of Military History'. Although some have derided the concept, the Great War is close enough to our own times and military forces have not changed that much for the concept to be judiciously applied to the actions and activities of the 1st Division.

Throughout the thesis a number of terms will appear and it necessary to explain these to ensure common understanding. The terms ‘strategy’, ‘operations’ and ‘tactics’ refer to the various levels of war. The strategic level of war embraces the ‘big picture’, the employment of a nation’s power to fight wars. It is usually divided into national or grand strategy, which is the concern of politicians and senior commanders at the highest echelons where the objectives of the war are set and the elements of national power are harnessed to achieve those objectives. Below this, military strategy concerns how the military elements of national power are employed to achieve the goals of the government. The operational level of war is a relatively recent addition to the lexicon of military terminology. This concept evolved with the growth of armies and the expansion of warfare both physically and intellectually, and refers to the conduct of campaigns and serves as the linkage between strategy and the lower level tactics. The tactical level of war revolves around the conduct of battles. [27]

Although the 1st Division was involved in influencing the outcome of the war through its participation in the campaigns on Gallipoli and the Western Front, its war was tactical. As aware as the commanders of the division may have been of the operational and strategic considerations that shaped the higher direction of the war, theirs was not the war of Field Marshal Lord Horatio Kitchener and Field Marshal Sir William Robertson, dealing with the politicians, or even that of the operational commanders such as General Sir Ian Hamilton on Gallipoli, General Sir John Maxwell and General Sir Archibald Murray in Egypt, or Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig in France. Their war was one of battles—battles on the beaches of Gallipoli, in the muddy trenches of Flanders and occasionally in the green fields of France.[28]

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[27] Australian Army, *Land Warfare Doctrine 1: The Fundamentals of Land Warfare*, Doctrine Wing Combined Arms Training and Doctrine Centre, Puckapunyal, 2008, pp 38–39.

[28] In 1907 the self-governing territories of the British Empire, including Australia, Canada and New Zealand, agreed that they should be referred to as self-governing dominions of Britain, which distinguished them from the non-self-governing colonies. Despite this change in status, at the outset of the war it was recognised by the dominions that the overall strategic direction of the war rested with Britain. Richard A Preston, *Canada and ‘Imperial Defense’: A Study of the origins of the British Commonwealth’s defense organization 1867–1919*, Duke University Press, Durham, 1967, p 464.

Other conventions will also be used for simplicity. Although technically up until the *Citizenship Act* of 1948 all Australian-born persons were British subjects, this study will refer to persons born in Australia as Australians. All persons born in the British Isles, which in 1914 included Ireland, will be referred to as British. Similarly, Turkey was a part of the Ottoman Empire during the Great War and it did not gain its independence until 1922; however, in referring to the defenders of the Gallipoli Peninsula I employ the term Turk to describe the opponents of the 1st Division. I have also endeavoured to keep abbreviations to a minimum in the text for ease of reading although I have used them in the diagrams and footnotes for simplicity and space. For weight and distances I have used metric measurements for the most part, even though in 1914 Australia was still employing the imperial system.

The combat performance of the Australian soldier during the Great War is legendary but that performance cannot be simply explained by the supposed natural prowess of Edwardian antipodeans. The diggers and their comrades in the other contingents of the British Empire faced a revolution. Historian Williamson Murray describes it as *the* Revolution in Military Affairs of the twentieth century, while scholars Jonathan Bailey and Tim Travers have both described the Great War as the birth of modern war.[29]

The Great War swept away the battlefield paradigm of the nineteenth century, heralding the bloody, total wars of the twentieth century. Nearly everything that became militarily commonplace during World War II evolved or was trialled during World War I.[30] On land it was the division that was the test-bed of this revolution and within its inner workings—in its very anatomy—can be discerned

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[29] Jonathan Bailey, 'The First World War and the birth of modern warfare', in Macgregor Knox and Williamson Murray (eds), *The dynamics of military revolution 1300–2050*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002, pp 132–153; Tim Travers, *The Killing Ground: The British Army, the Western Front and the Emergence of Modern War, 1900–1918*, Allen Unwin, London, 1987; and Williamson Murray, 'Thinking About Revolutions in Military Affairs', *Joint Forces Quarterly*, No 16 (Summer 1997) p 72.

[30] As Williamson Murray wrote '…of all military revolutions, World War I should be regarded as the most revolutionary in military terms. It involved creating combined arms, exploitation tactics, strategic bombing, unrestricted submarine warfare, carrier operations, and even amphibious warfare. Admittedly, in some aspects the weapons, technology, and tactical concepts provided only a glimpse into the future, but a glimpse was there nevertheless.' Williamson Murray, ibid.

the great leaps in administration, training and war fighting that reshaped the way battles were to be fought. In the following pages, in the history of a single division of the old British Empire, can be glimpsed: embryonic wireless command and control; the rise of specialist staffs; the growth of modern training methods; the origin of today's combined-arms techniques; the maturation of indirect fire support; the birth of contemporary infantry tactics; and the advent of modern administration, especially medical practices and mechanised, modularised logistics—all of which combined to create the modern deep, three-dimensional battlefield. And yet standing alongside these new phenomena are some old, enduring truths including the crucial role of battlefield leadership and the demand for moral and physical courage at all levels of command. These reinforced the indisputable importance of the human factor even in the midst of revolutionary, industrial-scale warfare.

CHAPTER 1

IN THE BEGINNING: MOBILISATION

In August 1914 Australia possessed no military organisation larger than a brigade and when its offer to raise and equip a division was accepted by Britain, the dominion had to create this force from scratch. The mobilisation process is important not just because it is the start of the 1st Division's story, it is also one of its defining periods. How the division was raised and dispatched and the thousands of decisions this entailed had consequences for how the division performed when it arrived in Egypt and later during its first trial on Gallipoli. In the longer-term the rushed and essentially extemporised mobilisation process had even broader impact, with seemingly inconsequential decisions made in 1914 having far-reaching implications for the division over the next four years.

The mobilisation period for the 1st Division commenced on 15 August 1914, when it was officially raised in Australia, and lasted until 8 December when it was finally assembled as a complete organisation for the first time at Mena Camp in Egypt. This period amounts to 116 days, which includes 68 days spent in Australia, 43 days at sea and five days in Egypt. The activities in this period are broken up between general operational activity related to organising its units (26 days), training (32 days), and administration (58 days), which includes the 43-day sea voyage.[1]

AN AUSTRALIAN DIVISION

The first suggestion to form an Australian division was made by Major General Sir Edward Hutton, the first post-Federation commander-in-chief of the Commonwealth Military Forces.[2] In 1902 Hutton proposed that Australia create

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[1] It could be argued that the 1st Division's mobilisation ceased when it left Australia. This study however, uses the date on which the division was for the first concentrated and under Bridges direct command and that did not occur until it was assembled at Mena. GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, August–December 1914, AWM4, item 1/42/1; and Admin Staff HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, August–December 1914, AWM4, item 1/43/1.

[2] Following Federation the various colonial military forces in Australia were merged to form the Commonwealth Military Forces. The army comprised two elements, a small body of full-time regulars (mostly officers and senior non-commissioned officers) of the Permanent Forces, and

a mobile field force, which would number 14,101 men in peace and increase to 28,748 in time of war. This force was to be capable of serving wherever the Australian Government desired. While Hutton's plans foundered on the Australian Government's defence austerity and suspicion of his imperial agenda, development of a home Defence Scheme continued under Colonel William Throsby Bridges and his subordinate Major Cyril Brudenell White.[3]

Compulsory military training, including mandatory cadet training for schoolboys, was eventually instituted in December 1909, just as Field Marshal Lord Kitchener, Commander-in-Chief in India and the Empire's most prestigious soldier, arrived in Australia to inspect the defences and make organisational recommendations. He called for an 80,000-strong citizen army organised into 21 infantry brigades, 28 light horse regiments and 56 batteries of artillery, with field engineer, communication and departmental troops in proportion. All 18- to 25-year-old men were expected to register and attend weekly parades and short annual camps. Under the *Defence Act 1903* however, this new and growing army was restricted to home defence and the Australian government refrained from giving a firm commitment to furnish military forces for Britain in the event of war.[4]

It was only in the last few years before the outbreak of war that Australia, after further deliberations at successive Imperial Conferences, turned its attention to planning for the possibility of an Australian expeditionary force in the event of

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the larger part-time Citizen Forces. In 1916 the title of the Permanent Forces was changed to Permanent Military Forces and that of the Citizen Forces to Citizen Military Forces.

[3] Edward 'Curly' Hutton was a British Army regular and the first and only commander-in-chief of the Commonwealth Military Forces. His early career included command of the colonial forces of New South Wales (1893–96) and Canada (1898–1900), before service in South Africa. After Federation he was selected to command the newly formed Australian army but was directed by the War Office to mould it so that it could contribute to imperial defence. Ultimately his plans failed due to his combative nature, a lack of funds and the reluctance of the dominion government to commit to any expeditionary force. Hutton however, did promote the careers of Bridges and White. Jeffrey Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, Third Edition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2008, pp 68–72; and John Mordike, *'We should do this thing quietly': Japan and the great deception in Australian defence policy 1911–1914*, Aerospace Centre, Fairbairn, 2002, pp 3–4.

[4] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, pp 9–10 and 33–34; Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, pp 64–65, 71 and 78–79; and Peter Pedersen, *The Anzacs: Gallipoli to the Western Front*, Penguin Books, Camberwell, 2010, pp 11–13.

war. It was no coincidence that across the Tasman Sea the New Zealand government was involved in similar discussions and planning at the same time. These separate considerations led to the first plans for formation of a combined division between the two neighbours.[5]

New Zealanders before World War I were generally more supportive of Britain's defence planning initiatives and more willing to support a contribution to an imperial expeditionary force than the other dominions. With the assumption of General Alexander Godley to command the New Zealand forces in 1912, this possibility took shape when he initiated discussions with James Allen, the New Zealand Minister of Defence. Godley, assuming a war with Germany to be the most probable threat to the Empire, proposed a number of possible options for the employment of a New Zealand expeditionary force. Prophetically Godley suggested that the New Zealanders might be sent to reinforce Egypt where it was likely that Turkey would join Germany and threaten the Suez Canal.[6]

After raising the matter with the Minister of Defence, Godley was authorised to begin planning and shortly after, when visiting Australia in November 1912 for army-to-army talks, he was able to discuss the matter in person with the Australian Chief of the General Staff (CGS), Brigadier General Joseph Gordon, a fellow British regular on secondment to Australia. Fortuitously elements of the Australian Government were thinking along similar lines. During the discussions that followed Australia indicated that it had in mind an expeditionary force of about 10,000 Australians and that New Zealand might make up the balance of some 6000 troops to allow the formation of a combined Australasian infantry division. The relative contributions of the two countries under this suggestion were to be on a proportional basis similar to their respective contingents sent to South Africa a decade earlier. At the same time it was stressed by both parties that these discussions did not amount to a commitment to supply forces to

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[5] For the development of pre-war defence plans see: John Mordike, *An Army for a Nation: A History of Australian Military Developments 1880–1914*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1992.

[6] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, pp 27–28; Charles Bean, *Two Men I Knew*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1957, p 90; and Ian McGibbon, *The Path to Gallipoli: Defending New Zealand 1840–1915*, GP Books, np, 1991, pp 239–240.

Britain, rather they simply recognised the necessity of planning for such a possibility in the event of war, and there the matter rested.[7]

In Australia any public acknowledgment that the government was planning to raise an expeditionary force to support Britain was guaranteed to provoke political controversy. Hence the planning initiated at this stage was only undertaken on a contingency basis even though the government and the opposition were well aware that there was likely to be widespread support for Britain in the event of a war with Germany. Despite this, the government would not countenance any concrete planning for an expeditionary force; instead planning was indirect and revolved around mobilisation in defence of Australia, from which it would be possible to draw an expeditionary force of volunteers.

Four years earlier Bridges had convinced the then Minister of Defence, Senator George Pearce, of the need to commence planning on a national Defence Scheme in case of war. Directed to produce a plan as a matter of urgency Bridges had, in the absence of an adequate national planning staff, decided to progress the task by organising a series of 'War Courses' at which selected officers in each military district prepared local plans that could be modified and incorporated into a consolidated national scheme.[8] This option, borne of necessity, had the advantage of involving many of the officers who would later be responsible for raising the 1st Division. Given the size of the proposed contingent and the geographical dispersion of pre-war military assets, this was probably the only viable plan. Unfortunately when Bridges commenced planning in 1908, the lack of a General Staff meant that the work was slow and could not be completed before he left office.[9] Fortunately his trusted subordinate Brudenell White continued the work, drafting the home defence mobilisation

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[7] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 28; and McGibbon, *The Path to Gallipoli*, pp 208–209 and 240.

[8] The six Australian states and the six military districts were geographically almost identical with the 1st Military District encompassing Queensland; the 2nd Military District covering most of New South Wales; the 3rd Military District, Victoria; the 4th Military District, South Australia; the 5th Military District, Western Australia; and the 6th Military District, Tasmania. The only major differences between state and military district boundaries were that Broken Hill in far western New South Wales was part of the 4th Military District, and part of the Northern Rivers district of New South Wales belonged to the 1st Military District. Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 22.

[9] Coulthard-Clark, *A Heritage of Spirit*, p 116.

plans from which a short-notice expeditionary force might be offered to Britain if the necessary volunteers came forward.[10]

On the afternoon of 3 August 1914 White, as the acting Chief of the General Staff, was tasked to attend a special Cabinet meeting in Melbourne and to 'furnish any plans that might exist for the sending of an expeditionary force from Australia oversea[s].'[11] According to Charles Bean, the contingency plans for a combined Australia-New Zealand expeditionary force were still sitting in White's bottom draw and these were 'the one piece of forethought on which the country depended in' the current emergency.[12] The problem was that White's scheme was based on only the two-thirds of a division originally anticipated by the military staff and this was not what the Australian Government had in mind.

RAISING THE 1ST AUSTRALIAN DIVISION

Spurred-on in the mistaken belief that Canada had offered 30,000 troops to Britain, the Australian Government offered to raise a force of 20,000 troops even before war was declared.[13] On 6 August, two days after Britain declared war on Germany, the Secretary for State for the Colonies accepted Australia's offer and requested that the force be dispatched as soon as possible. Inquiries as to the type of force required elicited the response 'that a suitable composition of the expeditionary force would be two infantry brigades, one light horse brigade, and one field artillery brigade', which would only amount to about 12,000 troops.[14] Bridges, who on 5 August had been given the task of organising the force, objected fearing that the Australian contingent would be broken-up among British formations. In a reply he drafted for the Defence

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[10] White writing to Charles Bean immediately after the war made it clear that the contingency plans for an Australian expeditionary force to support Britain were based on the size of Australia's contribution to the Boer War and shaped by the pre-war discussions with New Zealand. AWM38, 3DRL6673, item 153.

[11] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 27l; and Maj CBB White (acting CGS), diary entries, 3–4 August 1914, SLV: MS7824, Box 877.

[12] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 28.

[13] White prepared this telegram for the Minister of Defence and was in daily contact with him during this period. Maj CBB White, diary entries, 5–6 August 1914, SLV: MS824, Box 877.

[14] Quoted in Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 30.

Minister, the British government was advised that Australia expected the full offer of 20,000 troops to be accepted and as such had begun organising an infantry division, along with a light horse brigade and this would bring the total to 20,000. Britain agreed on the following day.[15]

Five days after the announcement of war, on Sunday 9 August the Minister for Defence, Senator Edward Millen announced in Melbourne that approval had been given to raise two expeditionary forces. The smaller Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (AN&MEF) was to seize the German possessions in New Guinea while Bridges was given the task of organising the larger 20,000-man expeditionary force destined for Europe. The formation of the main expeditionary force was announced in the *Commonwealth of Australia Gazette* (*CAG*) of 15 August, the official birthday of the 1st Australian Division.[16]

On the outbreak of war Bridges was the Inspector General and James Legge was Chief of the General Staff, with Brudenell White temporarily filling Legge's position in his absence.[17] Although Bridges suggested that Hutton be given command of the force, the Australian Government wanted one of its own and appointed Bridges. Wasting no time, on 8 August Bridges wrote to the Minister of Defence recommending White as his General Staff Officer Grade One (GSO1) and for all intents and purposes he became Bridges' chief of staff and right hand man for the next ten months.[18]

Although British-born, Bridges had trained at the Canadian Royal Military College at Kingston but did not graduate before he moved with his family to Australia where eventually joined the New South Wales Permanent Force. He saw service in South Africa, trained in Britain and he was one of the most

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[15] A full-strength 1914 British division after mobilisation contained just over 18,000 men and the light horse brigade would add just over 2000. General Staff, *Field Service Pocket Book (1914)*, HMSO, London, 1914 (Revised 1916), p 6 [hereafter referred to as GS, *FSPB (1914)*]; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, pp 31–32.

[16] *CAG* No 58, 15 August 1914, p 1511.

[17] Legge was still returning from Britain where he had been Australia's representative on the Imperial General Staff and he did not arrive back until 9 August. Lt Col CBB White, diary entry, 9 August 1914, SLV: MS824, Box 877.

[18] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 76.

technically proficient gunners in the Australia. In 1909 he served as Chief of the General Staff before becoming the founding commandant of the Royal Military College of Australia (RMC-A). By 1914 Bridges was considered the 'first soldier of the Commonwealth' and from the Australian Government's perspective the obvious choice to command its premier formation. Bridges, along with his trusted subordinate White, was the chief creator of the AIF and there is no doubt that he was highly intelligent, an exceptional organiser and physically brave. He was also a complex character, shy, sensitive, and difficult to work for. Even his admirer Charles Bean noted that 'Bridges was not a popular leader' and this was his first real test in higher command.[19]

White on the other hand was the ideal foil for his chief. He had joined the Queensland regular forces in 1899 and his service before the Great War included South Africa in 1902, before becoming the first Australian officer to attend the British Army Staff College at Camberley. Highly regarded by all who worked with him, White was the consummate chief of staff, combining tact with intellect and he at least had some knowledge of the relatively new British divisional organisation. It was just as well.[20]

The formation of a division, with all of its associated combat and service units, was outside the experience of all but a handful of officers in Australia in 1914.[21] Australia had never formed a permanent division and as noted previously its

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[19] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 69; Chris D Coulthard-Clark*, A Heritage of Spirit: A Biography of Major-General Sir William Throsby Bridges*, *KCB, CMG*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1979, pp 9, 15 and 25–27; W St Pierre Bunbury, 'The Beginnings of the School of Gunnery at Middle Head, Sydney', *Australian Army Journal*, No 288 (May 1973), p 32; Chris D Coulthard-Clark, 'Bridges, Sir William Throsby (1861–1915)'*, ADB*, Vol 7, pp 408–411; and Chris Coulthard-Clark, 'Major-General Sir William Throsby Bridges: Australia's First Field Commander', in David Horner (ed), *The Commanders: Australian military leadership in the twentieth century*, Allen and Unwin, North Sydney, 1984, pp 13–25.

[20] Cyril Brudenell White was promoted major general during the Great War and was a post-war Chief of the General Staff. He is regarded by many as Australia's greatest soldier even though he made his reputation as a staff officer rather than as a commander. Jeffrey Grey, 'White, Sir Cyril Brudenell Bingham (1876–1940)', *ADB*, Vol 12, pp 460–463.

[21] Under British doctrine the fighting arms were the cavalry, artillery, engineers, infantry, cyclists and the flying corps; while the support services included medical, ordnance and veterinary. General Staff, War Office, *Field Service Regulations Part I, Operations (1909)*, HMSO, London, 1909, reprinted with amendments 1914, p 14 [hereafter referred to as GS, *FSR Part I (1914)*].

largest peacetime organisation was the brigade.[22] Fortunately there were some Imperial officers on loan to Australia and several Australian regulars who had been trained at one of the British Staff Colleges who were aware of the doctrinal requirements. Most of the Staff College qualified officers had spent time attached to British formations and so they had at least been exposed to the theory of the divisional organisation and some had practical experience in their administration and training. This experience allowed Bridges, White and the Army Headquarters (HQ) staff in the week leading up to the government's announcement to draft plans for their force. In the first standing orders for the AIF, Bridges advised that that the division was to be titled the '1st Australian Division' and noted a number of variations to its organisation from the Australian War Establishment (WE) upon which its organisation was based.[23]

Following announcement of the formation of the AIF, Bridges and his staff maintained a hectic schedule working six-and-a-half-days a week including most nights.[24] The result of this work was a stream of orders from Army HQ to the military district commandants and the newly appointed formation commanders detailing how the force was to be organised, manned, equipped, trained and shipped overseas—all within in a month. The force was to be raised separate to the home-based Commonwealth Military Forces, with its own conditions of service, rules governing promotion, seniority and graduation list for officers.[25] Although many offered their services as soon war was declared, recruiting for the force only officially began on 11 August. In Sydney a disorderly mass of volunteers jostled one another to get in front of the recruiting officers and by the end of the first day 3600 had been selected. By 20 August over

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[22] Temporary divisions were occasionally formed for some of the annual training camps although these were more administrative than tactical. Commonwealth Military Forces of Victoria, *Report of the Annual Continuous Training, 10th to 17th January, 1910*, J Kemp, Melbourne, 18 February 1910, p 3.

[23] *Australian Imperial Force Orders*: No 1, Melbourne, 19 August 1914 (hereafter referred to as *AIFO*).

[24] White's diary simply notes a single entry written across the entries covering the first four days from 10 August: 'Busy at office day and night preparing Exped[itionar]y Force with Gen[era]l Bridges.' On Sunday 16 August he had his first night off in a week. Lt Col CBB White (GSO1 1st Aust Div), diary entries, 10–30 August 1914, SLV: MS824, Box 877.

[25] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 34.

10,000 men had enlisted in Sydney. Finding recruits however, was the least of the challenges facing the creators of the 1st Division.[26]

Even with the pre-war plans, the task ahead of Bridges and White was enormous and it was clear that an enlarged contingent of 20,000 was not something that the army was prepared for. Aside from recruiting and inducting the troops into the service, they had to be clothed, equipped and armed. Creating units from first principles also added to the difficulty. With hindsight it was suggested that the part-time Citizens Forces should have been used as a foundation for the AIF. This is just what White had initially suggested and Bridges had apparently agreed, but it appears that the pressure of time and the absence of any plans to do so ended this option prematurely.[27] A formal link between the Citizen Forces and the AIF would have been advantageous to both organisations and the success of the NZEF, which operated just such a system, is testament to this.[28]

Instead, the military district commandants had to deal with the swelling numbers of volunteers while grappling with their limited mobilisation facilities. Early concentration of units in the capital cities caused overcrowding and training problems but in many respects the brigades of the 1st Division were in a better position than later formed formations. Bridges stipulated that he wanted all volunteers to have already seen service, with at least one half of the rank-and-file to be drawn from those already serving in the Citizen Forces and the remainder to be ex-colonial militiamen, ex-Imperials or those who had seen

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[26] The early rush of volunteers meant that the recruiters could afford to be choosy, with initial enlistment conditions restricted to men aged 19 to 38, with exceptions being made for some senior officers; minimum height of 168 centimetres (five feet six inches); and a chest measurement of 86 centimetres (34 inches), although men of lighter build were allowed to enlist as drivers in the artillery. Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 59.

[27] AWM38, 3DRL6673, item 153.

[28] Under New Zealand's mobilisation plan each of its four military districts were directed to supply one regiment of mounted rifles and one battalion of infantry and so each Territorial Force regiment and battalion supplied the expeditionary force with a squadron and a company respectively. Not only did this system of harnessing the Territorial movement succeed for the first contingent, it enabled New Zealand to maintain a steady supply of volunteers for most of the war. Lt HTB Drew (ed), *Official History of New Zealand's War Effort Volume 4: The War Effort of New Zealand*, Witcombe and Toms, Auckland, 1923, pp xiii, 3 and 13; and Maj Fred Waite, *Official History of New Zealand's War Effort Volume 1: New Zealanders at Gallipoli*, Witcombe and Toms, Auckland, 1919, p 6.

some active service. Unfortunately the reality was to fall well short of his expectations.[29]

Although Bean implies that it was the 'great driving force of Bridges that created this new army within a month', this task was too complicated to be the work of one man.[30] Recruiting 20,000 men, organising them into formed units, equipping them and assembling them for transportation overseas was no simple task. In reality the rapid mobilisation of the division relied on the efforts of the small and over-worked Army HQ staff in Melbourne and the efforts of the military district commandants scattered across the states and territories of the Commonwealth.

Their task was complicated by a number of domestic factors. The first was the geographical dispersion of Australia's military forces and the lack of a central mobilisation area where the 1st Division could be concentrated. This meant that the only practical solution was to decentralise the process so that each district was given a quota of troops to raise, roughly in proportion to their population base. In outline, a brigade group was raised in each of New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria, with another brigade apportioned across the other states.[31] Initiating the process, at 1215 pm on 10 August, Army HQ dispatched a telegram to the commandants directing them to publish a notice calling for volunteers and to begin arrangements for establishing camps and for training. Later that day each district was advised of its quota.[32] For example, the 2nd Military District (NSW) was to raise a light horse regiment, an infantry brigade, an artillery brigade and a proportion of the ammunition column, engineer and department troops; while less populous 1st Military District (Queensland) was

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[29] AWM38, 3DRL6673, item 153.

[30] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 42.

[31] CGS, Diary of Events, 10 August 1914, AWM4, item 1/1/1 part 1.

[32] The AIF Establishments were advised to the military districts in: Circular X63 dated 13 August 1914. The modifications to the 1912 Australian WEs were advised in: *AIFO*: No 1, 19 August 1914; and again in *AIFO*: No 32, 14 October 1914. These Establishments were summarised and published separately in Australian Imperial Force, *Tables showing Composition of the 1st Australian Division and 1st Australian Light Horse Brigade*, Albert J Mullet, Melbourne, 1914 (hereafter referred to as AIF, *Tables*, 1914).

only required to provide a light horse regiment, an infantry battalion, a field artillery battery and a proportion of the ammunition column, some engineers and depot troops. Although there were a number of minor adjustments made to these allocations right up until the time of sailing, the broad allocations remained firm for this contingent and those formed later.[33]

If raising the force was complicated by geography, Bridges hoped to capitalise on the parochial loyalties that shaped Australia a little more than a decade after Federation. Hence he directed that:

> *The troops will be raised on a territorial basis in order to associate definite areas, and the military units now existing in such areas, with the several Battalions, squadrons, Batteries, &c. in this way each unit will represent a State, and a distinct locality, and the troops in that locality. Officers and men will thus bring with them, representative as they will be of definite districts and of troops belonging to such districts, all the cohesion, feelings of comradeship, and local association, which are such valuable elements in promoting the highest standard of discipline in the field and of gallantry before the enemy.*[34]

It was good in theory but as Bridges was to find in Egypt the disparate nature of his force made these sentiments only an aspiration for some time to come.

PERSONNEL

The 1st Division had a total establishment of just over 18,000 all ranks.[35] Its upper echelons of senior command and staff were mostly drawn from the thin ranks of Australian regulars or British officers on loan to Australia. Bridges was able to take the cream of the Australian and British regular staff at Army HQ and

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[33] For minor changes to the military district allocations see: *AIFO*: No 2, 26 August 1914; *AIFO*: No 4, 29 August 1914; *AIFO*: No 10, 5 September 1914; *AIFO*: No 14, 10 September 1914; *AIFO*: No 16, 14 September 1914; and *AIFO*: No 22, 21 September 1914.

[34] Maj Gen WT Bridges, copy of AIF112/2/10 to military district commandants, 11 August 1914, AWM38, 3DRL6673, item 153.

[35] The 1st Division Establishment authorised a total of 640 officers and 17,383 ORs. *AIFO*: No 1.

from his old command at RMC-A, Duntroon. At formation level, the brigade commanders were long-serving Citizen Forces officers and one British regular, while their staffs were Australian and British regular officers. At unit level the commanding officers (CO), field rank officers and company commanders were overwhelmingly selected from serving part-time personnel.[36] Hence, of the 631 original officers of the 1st Division, only 24 had never served before. In all 68 were or had been officers of the Permanent Forces, including 23 recent Duntroon graduates, while another 16 were regular officers of the British Army and a further 15 were retired British officers. A total of 104 of the officers had seen some previous active service, mostly in South Africa during the Boer War.[37]

Among the rank and file experience was considerably thinner. While it was hoped that half of the original 1st Division could be drawn from the ranks of the Citizen Forces, this expectation was not met. Only 2263 volunteers were currently serving citizen soldiers, while another 1555 were older ex-militiamen, and another 2460 had at some time served in the Australian militia. Bolstering the thin veneer of experience were some 1308 ex-British regulars and another 1009 ex-British Territorials. In the end fewer than three in five of the men had seen previous military service and more than a third, some 6098, had never served before.[38]

Although generalisations can be dangerous it is possible to sketch an outline profile of one of the typical early enlistees. He was most probably a young white male of prime military age, somewhere around 24. He was most likely an Australian-born British subject, although there was a significant minority of British-born volunteers and a smattering of others from other parts of the

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[36] Company grade officers comprise the lowest commissioned officer ranks including those of the rank of second lieutenant (2Lt), lieutenant (Lt) and captain (Capt). Field grade officers were those of rank major (Maj), lieutenant colonel (Lt Col) and colonel (Col). In the British Army officers of these ranks commanded sub-units and units from platoon to battalion/regiment in size. General officers included brigadier general (Brig Gen), major general (Maj Gen), lieutenant general (Lt Gen) and general (Gen).

[37] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 54.

[38] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 60; and 'Summary of—Personnel Statistics', attached to 1st Aust Div, Div Orders No 43, 27 January 1915, AWM27, item 352/19.

Empire, which accounted for more than a quarter of the original division. There was also a sprinkling of Aborigines and foreign-born volunteers from just about every nation from across the globe but these exotics accounted for less than one in every 200. Our digger most likely hailed from one of the major urban centres of New South Wales or Victoria and he and his town-bred mates clearly outnumbered their country cousins. Whether from the city or bush he was almost certainly single. Although his officers were drawn from the ranks of the middle class professions, our digger was most likely a 'blue-collar' worker, with a third of the volunteers being tradesmen, nearly another third being labourers and less than one in five being employed in bush occupations. Physically he was in good health with a minimum height of 168 centimetres. When it came to religion, while he may not have been a regular church-goer, he almost certainly professed allegiance to one of the four main Christian churches—Anglican, Catholic, Presbyterian and Methodist—although he was more likely to be an Anglican. His motivations for volunteering were complex and varied with the individual. Some joined out of loyalty to the 'old country' and Empire, others out of an embryonic sense of nationalism and a desire to prove Australia's worth on the world stage, and others were morally outraged by German atrocities, real and exaggerated. Intermixed with the lofty sentiments were less altruistic reasons such as the lure of adventure, a desire to see the world, and even a subtle form of economic compulsion, since work was scarce in 1914 and AIF pay was among the best.[39]

Besides this generic digger there was no shortage of characters and men of distinction who joined the division. Among its early enlistees were a polar explorer (Captain Robert Bage); Rhodes Scholars (Lieutenant Colonel Henry Fry and Sergeant 'Billy' Kent-Hughes); the inaugural secretary of the New South Wales Rugby Football League (Sergeant Frederick Larkin); the grandson of the Eureka rebellion leader (Captain Joseph Lalor); a son of a pioneering explorer (Major Felix Giles); an ex-Minister of Defence (Colonel James McCay); the son of a prime minister (Lieutenant George Cook); a Boer War mutineer (Private

[39] 'Summary of—Personnel Statistics', attached to 1st Aust Div, Div Orders No 43, 27 January 1915, AWM27, item 352/19; Bean, AOH, Vol I, pp 59–60 and 84; Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, pp 89–90; and Pedersen, *The Anzacs*, pp 19–20.

Herbert Parry); an Olympian (Private Tom 'Rusty' Richards); Australian 'Wallabies' and British 'Lions' (Tom Richards and Major Blair Swannell); a Magarey medallist (Private Phillip de Quetteville Robin); Western Australia's Crown Prosecutor (Major Francis Parker); writers (Gunner Frederick 'Sydney' Loch); the first director of what was to become the Walter and Eliza Hall Research Institute (Captain Gordon Mathison); and the nephew of the future Field Marshal Sir Douglas Haig (Lieutenant James Haig). These men, and the tens of thousands more who followed them, brought character, colour, depth and individualism to the drab, pea-green ranks of the 1st Division.[40]

The all-important non-commissioned officers (NCOs), the backbone of any unit, were generally more experienced than their men although their experience was often superficial. The bulk of the 1st Division's NCOs were drawn from volunteers who transferred from the Citizens Forces, although they could not transfer to the AIF with their current rank; instead they had to be reappointed in the new force. A smattering of ex-British and a handful of Australian regular NCOs provided much needed instructors and a veneer of broader experience. In the end however, there were still vacancies and a number of NCOs were appointed from those volunteers who appeared to possess leadership potential based purely on their civilian occupation. The result was that the 1st Division was an enthusiastic and heterogeneous group of Australian- and British-born volunteers, most with limited prior military training and very little operational experience.

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[40] Peter Burness, 'A quiet hero', *Wartime*, Issue 47, pp 40–41; Phillip Jones, 'Fry, Henry Kenneth (1886–1959)', *ADB*, Vol 14, p 230; IR Hancock, 'Kent Hughes, Sir Wilfred Selwyn (1895–1970)', *ADB*, Vol 15, pp 6–7; Chris Cunneen, 'Larkin, Edward Rennix (1880–1915)', *ADB*, Vol 9, p 673; Chris Clark, 'The Gallipoli Sword', *Wartime*, Issue 23, pp 12–13; Cecil Lock, *The Fighting 10th: A South Australian Centenary Souvenir of the 10th Battalion*, Webb and Son, Adelaide, 1935, pp 39, 175 and 178; Geoffrey Serle, 'McCay, Sir James Whiteside (1864—1930)', *ADB*, Vol 10, pp 224–227; National Archives Australia (NAA): series B2455, file COOK GS; Greg Growden, *Gold, Mud 'N' Guts: The incredible Tom Richards: footballer, war hero, Olympian*, ABC Books, Sydney, 2001, pp 29–30 and 33; Jack Pollard, *Australian Rugby Union: The Game and the Players*, Angus and Robertson in association with ABC, Sydney, 1984, pp 794–795; WJ Edgar, *Veldt to Vietnam (Haleians at War)*, Old Haleians' Association, Wembley Downs, 1994, pp 23 and 246; Susanna De Vries, *Blue Ribbons Bitter Bread: The life of Joice Nankivell Loch*, Pandanus Press, Brisbane, 2004, pp 67–68; HW Allen (ed), *The University of Melbourne Record of Active Service of Teachers, Graduates, Undergraduates, Officers and Servants in the European War, 1914–1918*, HJ Green, Melbourne, 1926, p 30; and NAA: series B2455, file HAIG JL.

To command this polymorphous group would require considerable skill and it needed leaders of high calibre if the division was to be made ready and dispatched within the anticipated four weeks. Instead of trying to centrally identify officers, Bridges decided upon the expedient of selecting his formation commanders and then allowing them to select their own unit COs. The COs were then given a free hand to select their subordinates, although they were guided by a committee established in each military district for the purpose of recommending officers.[41] In this way the selection process was completed quickly and units were given the maximum amount of time to form and train; but much depended on the initial selection of formation commanders and how good these men were at choosing the right subordinates.[42]

To command the 1st Infantry Brigade (AIF), Bridges chose Colonel Henry MacLaurin. MacLaurin was a Sydney barrister and a long-serving member of the Citizen Forces who was also remarkably young; in fact at 36 years of age he was younger than any of the original battalion commanders.[43] English-born Colonel James Whiteside McCay was chosen to command the 2nd Infantry Brigade (AIF) and like MacLaurin he was politically well connected and a long-serving citizen soldier.[44] Command of the 3rd Infantry Brigade was given to Colonel Ewen Sinclair-MacLagan, a British regular who was serving on attachment to RMC-A. Sinclair-MacLagan was at the time the Director of Drill at

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[41] Instructions were issued to each unit commander giving them broad guidelines on the appointment of officers. These instructions included direction on who was to be appointed to specific unit positions, such as the adjutant who was to be a regular officer; advice on the allocation of regular staff including RMC-A graduates and staff sergeant majors; and instructions on the appointment of specialist officers such as the Regimental Medical Officer and Signalling Officer. It also provided information on administrative matters such as attestation of recruits, clothing and equipment and training matters. BM 3rd Inf Bde (AIF), Memorandum 'To the Officer Commanding Q Battalion, 3rd Infantry Brigade, Australian Imperial Force (through the Commandant 1st Military District)', 14 August 1914, AWM27, item 303/211.

[42] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 42.

[43] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 51; and Ann M Mitchell, 'MacLaurin, Sir Henry Normand (1835–1914)', *ADB*, Vol 10, pp 327–329.

[44] McCay later commanded the 5th Australian Division. Christopher Wray, *Sir James Whiteside McCay: A Turbulent Life*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2002 pp 13–22 and 33.

the college and it was his earlier and close association with Bridges that led to his appointment to the AIF.[45]

As with Bridges' choice of key subordinates, the brigade commanders naturally favoured those officers with whom they had previously served and in the case of Citizen Forces officers, they tended to select old and trusted Citizen Forces subordinates. For example in the 2nd Brigade McCay selected David Wanliss, a part-time officer commanding the 52nd Infantry, for command of the 5th Battalion (AIF). For the 6th Battalion (AIF) he chose an old Australian Intelligence Corps subordinate James Semmens. The 7th Battalion (AIF) went to the mercurial Harold 'Pompey' Elliott, commander of the 58th Infantry (Essendon Rifles) who had won the Distinguished Conduct Medal during the Boer War and was the only one of the McCay's COs to have seen previous active service. For the 8th Battalion (AIF) he chose William Bolton, another serving citizen soldier CO.[46]

The unit commanders then selected their subordinates in consultation with their brigade commander. Again the COs demonstrated a distinct preference for those with whom they had recently served. In the 6th Battalion Semmes took four members of the Victorian section of the Intelligence Corps to join him.[47] This preferential treatment, while understandable in a small army, did lead to some speculation on how fair the system was and undoubtedly there were cases of nepotism. Even Bean notes that there were suspicions the initial officer selection was made more on the basis of social standing than on military

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[45] AJ Hill, 'Sinclair-MacLagan, Ewen George (1868—1948)', *ADB*, Vol 11, pp 616–618; and Colonel JE Lee, *Duntroon: The Royal Military College of Australia 1911–1946*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1952, p 13.

[46] The original infantry COs were (with decorations at that time): Leonard Dobbin, VD (1st Bn AIF); George Braund, VD (2nd Bn AIF); Robert Owen, CMG (3rd Bn AIF); Astley Thompson, VD (4th Bn AIF); David Wanliss, VD (5th Bn AIF); James Semmens, VD (6th Bn AIF); Harold Elliott, DCM VD (7th Bn AIF); William Bolton, VD (8th Bn AIF); Henry Lee (9th Bn AIF); Stanley Weir (10th Bn AIF); James Lyon Johnston (11th Bn AIF); and Lancelot Clarke (12th Bn AIF). Ron Austin, *Our Dear Old Battalion: The Story of the 7th Battalion AIF, 1914–1919*, Slouch Hat Publications, McCrae, 2004, pp 8 and 9; AIF, *Staff Regimental and Graduation List of Officers*, 6 December 1914; and Military Order 531 of 1914, 23 September 1914, p 14.

[47] AIF, *Staff Regimental and Graduation List of Officers*, 6 December 1914, pp 20, 69, 86 and 87; and Chris D Coulthard-Clark*, The Citizen General Staff: the Australian Intelligence Corps 1907–1914*, Military Historical Society of Australia, Canberra, 1976, p 50.

ability.[48] Be that as it may, these commanders were expected to raise, train and lead their units into battle and so quite naturally they sought out subordinates with whom they knew they could work and trust, and in reality probably no other system could have worked in the time available.

Once the command structure was established the units began filling out their ranks. Each of the formations and units were allotted recruiting areas from which to draw volunteers. While this territorial system was deliberately chosen by Bridges to stimulate a sense of community and cohesion within the units, maintaining the territorial integrity of units was difficult to achieve in practice. Recruiting between units varied considerably depending on whether they were raised within a single military district or several, and depending on whether the unit was drawn from city or regional areas, or a combination of the two.

In New South Wales the four battalions of MacLaurin's 1st Brigade were each given a number of Citizen Forces training areas from which to draw their recruits. The 1st and 4th Battalions were mostly recruited from the areas straddling metropolitan Sydney, with Leonard Dobbin's 1st Battalion (AIF) to be largely drawn from the western suburbs, or at least that was the theory. Officially the 1st Battalion's recruits were to be drawn from training areas 29 through to 36 which covered the 'inner west' suburbs of Sydney, an area bounded by Balmain to the north, Haberfield and Glebe to the west and east, and Marrickville to the south.[49] In reality the unit ended up drawing on a far broader area and it never really was 'the City of Sydney's Own'; with slightly less than one third coming from the western suburbs, roughly a third from across the other areas of metropolitan Sydney, another third from throughout the state and rounded off with a small percentage from interstate and overseas.[50] George Braund's 2nd Battalion (AIF) was allotted training areas 13

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[48] Bean was specifically referring to the 1st Infantry Brigade (AIF) where MacLaurin and his old second-in-command, Charles Macnaghten, worked closely together and probably influenced the choice of officers throughout the brigade. 'Indeed the notion began to spread that the selections were being made by a coterie of the Australian Club in Sydney.' Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 54.

[49] Col H MacLaurin, 'Confidential Report on the Raising and Equipping of the First Infantry Brigade, Australian Imperial Force', AWM4, item 23/1/3 part 2 appendix 28.

[50] Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, p 32.

through to 20, all of which were in the northern portion of the state, extending from the northern side of Sydney Harbour to the border with Queensland.[51] Its attempts at forging special territorial affiliations also largely failed and its unit history notes that the battalion 'was truly an "Imperial" force " with its members drawn from 'most towns in NSW and all other States in Australia, New Zealand, the British Isles, Canada and South Africa'.[52] Robert Owen's 3rd Battalion (AIF) was largely drawn from the west of the state and the south coast but it also included a broad mix; and Astley Thompson's 4th Battalion (AIF), recruiting from the eastern suburbs of Sydney, faced similar challenges. The same process was at work below the border in Victoria where McCay's 2nd Brigade was raised. The greatest challenges however, appear to have been faced by Sinclair-MacLagan.[53]

The 'all-Australian' 3rd Brigade was recruited from the four less-populous outer or 'fringe' states. Harry Lee's 9th Battalion was drawn from across 1st Military District, which stretched the length and breadth of Queensland from Cape York and down into the Northern Rivers district of New South Wales. Stanley Weir's 10th Battalion (AIF) was drawn from the 4th Military District, which included of South Australia and the Broken Hill district of far-western New South Wales. James Lyon Johnston's 11th Battalion (AIF) was drawn from across Western Australia with something less than a third of its personnel coming from Perth and Fremantle. The rest of the battalion was drawn from the rural areas including the western goldfields, the southwest timber country, the wheat-belt area and the mid-west. Lancelot Clarke's nominally Tasmanian 12th Battalion was in the unenviable position of being drawn from across three states. Its four Tasmanian companies were raised on a territorial basis with A Company recruited from Hobart and the south, B Company from Launceston and the northeast, C Company from the northwest, and D Company from the west coast. Its two South Australian sub-units, E and F companies, were drawn

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[51] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 41.

[52] FW Taylor and TA Cusak, *Nullus Secundas: A History of the 2nd Battalion, AIF 1914–1919*, New Century Press, Sydney, 1942, p 34.

[53] Austin, *Our Dear Old Battalion*, p 8.

mostly from Port Pirie miners while there were also the two West Australian sub-units, G and H companies.[54]

While the original direction given to the commanders was that their organisations were to be recruited with a high proportion of ex-soldiers or currently serving citizen soldiers, this stipulation was never realistic.[55] It appears that only a few of the artillery sub-units drawn from the outer states were willing to enlist *en masse*. When Major Alfred Bessell-Browne, the Officer Commanding the 37th Battery, called for volunteers for his newly raised 8th Battery (AIF), his whole battery stepped forward and even after the youngest compulsory trainees had been rejected most of the battery still came from the Citizen Forces.[56] In Tasmania the local Hobart battery volunteered to man at the first parade night after war was declared and they were enlisted in the 9th Battery (AIF).[57] These units however, were the exception and most other units had a considerably smaller Citizen Forces representation. Typical was the case of the 2nd Battery (AIF), which was to draw its recruits as far as possible from the part-time personnel of the 5th Brigade of Artillery. Of the 140 men who paraded at the Sydney Show Grounds on 24 August, 37 had been in the old militia artillery and a further 44 younger soldiers were currently serving in the Citizen Forces. The remainder comprised three recruits from other parts of the part-time forces, 25 with some background in artillery, nine with some military training but not in the artillery, and 22 who had no military experience but who could ride a horse.[58] Even so the artillery was in a much better position than the

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[54] Norman K Harvey, *From Anzac to the Hindenburg Line: The History of the 9th Battalion, AIF*, 9th Battalion Association, Brisbane, 1941, pp 1–2; and Leslie M Newton, *The Story of the Twelfth: A Record of the 12th Battalion*, J Walch and Sons for 12th Battalion Association, Hobart, 1925, republished by John Burridge Military Antiques, Swanbourne, 2000, pp 18, 20 and 27.

[55] Some commanders, such as McCay, went further than Bridges, advising COs to reject all volunteers who did not have previous militia or Citizen Forces experience. Ross McMullin, *Pompey Elliott*, Scribe Publications, Melbourne, 2002, p 85.

[56] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 58.

[57] Horner, *The Gunners*, p 80.

[58] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 86.

infantry and most battalions struggled to recruit more than 20 percent of their strength from the Citizen Forces.[59]

The other exception to the general experience was a single battery of the regular Royal Australian Field Artillery (RAFA). On 18 August 'A' Field Battery (RAFA) was invited to volunteer for the AIF and this sub-unit along with its commander, Major Sydney Christian, volunteered to a man.[60] A number of the younger soldiers had to be posted out but in effect A Battery was simply re-designated the 1st Battery of the 1st FA Brigade (AIF)—making it the only regular sub-unit in the 1st Division. The fact that its personnel were concentrated in a single battery, rather than being used as the nucleus for the other eight divisional batteries was a decision made by Bridges, who as an ex-gunner officer was possibly demonstrating some partiality on this occasion.[61]

Other than meeting the basic physical requirements, the volunteers required little other qualification. In an era before psychological or aptitude testing the basis for allotting available manpower to the various arms and services was crude to say the least. In Tasmania the Camp Commandant, Major RP Smith, personally interviewed each of the volunteers and applied his own rule of thumb:

> *Those with previous experience were at once allotted to that branch of the service in which they had been trained, whilst those with experience in the handling of horses were drafted to either Light horse or Artillery Units. The remainder…were led off in a*

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[59] The New South Wales-raised 1st Battalion (AIF) was supposed maintain company affiliations with the Citizen Forces battalions in its recruiting area, and while there were small concentrations of Citizen Forces volunteers in a number of companies, the overall proportion of such enlistees amounted to only 17 percent. Stacey, *The History of the First Battalion, AIF*, p 14; and Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, pp 22 and 31.

[60] Christian was soon promoted lieutenant colonel to take command of the 1st FA Brigade (AIF) and in his place command of the 1st Battery fell to Major Harry Sweetland, another regular officer. Richmond Cubis, *A History of "A" Battery, New South Wales Artillery (1871–1899), Royal Australian Artillery (1899–1971)*, Elizabethan Press, Sydney, 1978, pp 126–127.

[61] A small number of regular personnel were employed as a nucleus for the 2nd and 3rd batteries but the 1st Battery (AIF) remained a largely exclusive professional battery. Cubis, *A History of "A" Battery, New South Wales Artillery (1871–1899), Royal Australian Artillery (1899–1971)*, pp 125 and 126 fn5.

> *straggling formation to that portion of the camp allotted to the "gravel crunchers."*[62]

As Smith implies the majority of the 1st Division's volunteers, over 12,000 in total, were allocated to the division's 12 infantry battalions, which held more than two-thirds of the division's personnel. The next largest group, with less than 3000 men, were the 'gunners' who manned the field pieces of the three artillery brigades. The third largest group, but considerably smaller again with about half as many as the gunners, was the division's administrative personnel who manned the various service corps units. There were also smaller groups (each of less than 1000) of 'sappers' in the three engineer field companies and the division's single mounted regiment of light horse.[63]

If the raising of the infantry was a largely improvised affair, the HQ staff and the specialist troops could not afford to be. The technical arms such as artillery, engineers and signals not only managed specialist equipment, they also required a much broader range of skills than those of the infantry battalions and these trades could not be grown overnight. In 1914 the most technical units in the division were its artillery batteries. When Joseph Talbot Hobbs was appointed Commander Divisional Artillery (CDA) on 11 August, he faced an immediate dilemma. He was located in Perth on the far west of the continent while the bulk of his command was to be raised on the east coast, some 3000 kilometres away.[64] For the first two weeks Hobbs did little other than travel from

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[62] Newton, *The Story of the Twelfth*, p 17.

[63] The infantry totalled 12,234 all ranks (68 percent); the artillery 2753 all ranks (15 percent); the engineers 785 all ranks (four percent); and the light horse 530 all ranks (three percent). The total for the supporting services (including service corps, remount department, medical, veterinary, chaplains, ordnance, pay, postal, automobile corps and military police) amounted to a combined total of 1666 all ranks (nine percent). The HQ staff and attachments amounted to 67 all ranks (less .004 percent). General Staff, Australia, *War Establishments of 1st Australian Division and Subsequent Units Raised and Despatched for Active Service*, Albert J Mullet, Melbourne, 1915, Appendix 1, p 125 (hereafter referred to as GS, *WE of the 1st Australian Division*, 1915).

[64] Joseph Talbot Hobbs was an English-born, pre-war architect and Citizen Force officer. He commenced military service in 1883 and on the outbreak of war he was commanding the 22nd Infantry Brigade. Like many long-serving citizen soldiers, Hobbs took his part-time military service seriously and actively sought to broaden his knowledge and experience, often at his own expense. He had attended gunnery courses in Britain and taken a diploma of military science at the University of Sydney. His association with the 1st Division's artillery was to be

Perth, to Adelaide, to Melbourne and on to Brisbane where he inspected the Queensland raised elements of the divisional artillery.[65]

The Director of Army Signals at Army HQ was Captain Harry Mackworth, a British loan officer.[66] Due to his efforts, and those of diligent local officers such as Lieutenant (later Lieutenant Colonel) Stan Watson, the 1st Division was able to form the divisional signal company complete with officers and other ranks from men who had nearly all served in the Australian part- or full-time forces, or the British Army.[67] Furthermore, many of those who had served in the Citizen Forces were employed in the private or public sector communications industries. For example Major Thomas Wilson, who was commanding the 30th Signal Section in Western Australia, was a telegraph operator with the Post Master General's (PMG) department in that state. On learning of Wilson's appointment to the AIF and that he was about to join his company, Mackworth sent a telegram pleading: 'For God's sake, Wilson bring decent signallers, I understand you are a decent instructor.'[68] Before leaving Perth Wilson selected 25 candidates for the divisional signal company from the 50 or more recruits

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long and mostly successful and not until 1917 did he leave the division to command the 5th Australian Division. AJ Hill, 'Hobbs, Sir Joseph John Talbot (1864–1938)', *ADB*, Vol 9, pp 315–317; and David Coombes, *The Lionheart: A Life of Lieutenant-General Sir Talbot Hobbs*, Australian Military History Publications, Loftus, 2007.

[65] Hobbs was appointed CDA on 11 August and four days later he departed Fremantle by ship arriving in Adelaide on 19 August. Boarding an overnight train for Melbourne, he spent two days there before leaving for Sydney by train with Bridges on 22 August, arriving there the next day. After a day in Sydney he boarded an overnight train for Brisbane. By 29 August he was back in Melbourne. HQ 1st Aust Div Arty, War Diary, 11–29 August 1914, AWM4, item 13/10/1.

[66] Harry Mackworth was a 36-year-old British Army regular officer. He had seen service in South Africa, Somaliland, Egypt and the Sudan before becoming the first Director of Army Signals in Australia. He served on Gallipoli and the Western Front until he was replaced as OC by Grosvenor Gordon, one of the original subalterns of the 1st Divisional Signals Company. Mackworth then returned to British service. AIF, *Staff Regimental and Graduation List of Officers*, 6 December 1914, pp 7, 14 and 65; Alan Harfield, *Pigeon to Packhorse: The Illustrated Story of Animals in Army Communications*, Picton Publishing, Chippenham, 1989, pp 34–37 and 61; Theo Barker, *Signals: A History of the Royal Australian Corps of Signals 1788–1947*, The Royal Australian Corps of Signals Corps Committee, Canberra, 1987, p 34; and Maj Gen RR McNicoll, *Making and Breaking: The Royal Australian Engineers 1902 to 1919*, Corps Committee of the Royal Australian Engineers, Canberra, 1979, p 203.

[67] Thyer, *The Royal Australian Corps of Signals,* p 12.

[68] Wilson was subsequently appointed chief instructor of a signal school established at Broadmeadows. James Lumsden McKinlay, *Bring Decent Signallers: The Memoirs of Colonel James Lumsden McKinlay OBE MM ED 1894–1984*, The Royal Australian Corps of Signals Committee, Watsonia, 1995, p 4.

who were hoping to join. Corporal (later Colonel) James McKinlay was one of these hopefuls and he recalled:

> *My capabilities as a signaller, although I was a corporal, were very limited—with difficulty I could read about four words per minute on the flags and about the same on the lamp. Among my tent mates were PMG operators who could do twenty or more words a minute without difficulty; a few could even sharpen their pencil at the same time as reading.*[69]

Fortunately Mackworth also had the assistance of a number of long-serving Permanent Forces staff and some experienced ex-Imperial soldiers. McKinlay recalled a member of his group who had completed nearly 14 years with the 'colours' and had served in India 'and what he didn't know about helio, buzzer, and flag sending and receiving was nobody's business.'[70] Even with this support Mackworth's task was a difficult one given that he was not only responsible for raising his own company, he was also responsible for the equipment and technical training of the regimental signallers allotted to the artillery brigades and the infantry battalions.[71]

Two units provided the logistics support to the division: the 1st Divisional Ammunition Column (AIF)—or DAC; and the 1st Divisional Train (AIF)—or the 'Train'. The DAC, as its name implies was responsible for the provision of all natures of ammunition, while all other supplies were the responsibility of the Train. The formation of the Train was probably more complicated than any other divisional unit. This unit was the only one of its type on the divisional Establishment and it too was raised on a geographical basis, which meant that it was drawn from across five of the six military districts. The 2nd Military District

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[69] Col JL McKinlay, 'A Sapper goes to War', *Stand To*, Vol 10, No 5 (July–September 1966) p 17; and McKinlay, *Bring Decent Signallers*, p 5.

[70] Ibid.

[71] 'Instructions to Infantry Battalion commanders Regarding Their Regimental Signallers', nd, AWM27, item 303/179. The content of this document indicates that Mackworth was responsible for the technical training of the infantry battalion signallers and it is clear that this document was written soon after mobilisation.

(NSW) provided half of HQ Company and Number 2 Company, while the other half of HQ Company and Number 3 Company were drawn from the 3rd (Victoria). The supply details and half of the transport details of Number 4 Company came from the 4th Military District (South Australia), while 5th (Western Australia) and 6th (Tasmania) districts contributed the remaining half of the transport details for Number 4 Company. These arrangements meant that there was considerable cross-transfer of personnel, with inter-state details having to be concentrated and then shipped to join their companies. It was an even greater challenge when it came to its horses.

The Divisional Train relied literally on horsepower for its mobility—734 horses in total. These animals were purchased only in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, which eased the problem of transhipping but limited the choice in acquiring appropriate draft horses needed to haul the general service (GS) wagons. In the first week of its existence there were a flurry of instructions issued to the Officers Commanding (OC) the companies while the CO, Major Jeremy Taylor Marsh, handed-over his duties as Director of Supply and Transport at Army HQ so that he could assume command of his widely scattered unit. Similar difficulties faced the DAC and divisional medical units.[72]

The pre-war Director General Medical Services was Colonel William 'Mo' Williams and Bridges chose Williams as the Director Medical Services for the AIF.[73] Mo Williams had a long and distinguished military career stretching back to service in the Sudan in 1885. He was a superb organiser and his innovative ideas had done much to prepare the Australian Army Medical Corps (AAMC) in the decade before the Great War although he had to struggle constantly against government neglect. Although matters had improved and manning levels were

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[72] 1st Div Train (AIF), War Diary, 17 and 18–26 August 1914 and appendix I, nd, AWM4, item 25/14/1; and HQ 1st Aust Div Arty, War Diary, AWM4, item 13/10/1.

[73] William David Campbell Williams was an Australian-born, long-serving AAMC officer. He studied medicine at University College, London and later served in the Sudan and Boer War, gaining a reputation as an innovator and first-class organiser. Unfortunately when he was appointed Director Medical Services he was 58 years old, overweight and in poor health. Bridges formed a low opinion of him during the voyage to Egypt and increasingly turned to Neville Howse for medical advice. NAA: B2455, file WILLIAMS WDC; and AJ Hill, 'Williams, Sir William Daniel Campbell (1856–1919)', *ADB*, Vol 12, pp 506–508.

rising, and Williams had managed to procure a strategic stock of medical supplies by 1914, the AAMC still faced significant transport and equipment shortfalls.[74]

The division's primary medical units were its three field ambulances and each of these was raised on a geographical basis similar to the infantry brigades. Thus, the 1st Field Ambulance was raised from the 2nd Military District, the 2nd Field Ambulance came from 3rd Military District and the 3rd Field Ambulance was raised across the other four districts. Upon mobilisation the medical profession was advised of the probable need for a considerable number of doctors and the public hospitals and universities were approached for their cooperation. Between the wartime volunteers drawn directly from the civilian medical infrastructure and existing elements of the AAMC, Williams was able to raise the division's ambulances and staff the unit medical details even though he too faced the same problems as the other commanders attempting to raise units from across a number of districts.[75]

MATERIEL AND HORSEFLESH

The sheer quantity of equipment required for the creation of the 1st Division was to stretch the ordnance supplies of Australia to breaking point. It was fortunate that a number of government factories had been established prior to the war for the production of weapons, clothing and equipment. It was these factories that provided many of the basic items for the 1st Division. As each military district formed their contingents they were directed to procure equipment through their local ordnance officers. Where there were insufficient items available in the stores, the equipment was to be transferred from the local Citizen Forces units. Despite the plundering of the home forces, there were still some items that could not be procured in time and either these were done without or the mobilisation tables modified when an 'in lieu' item could be found

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[74] Michael Tyquin, *Little by Chance: A Centenary History of the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps*, Army History Unit, Canberra, 2003, pp 80–113.

[75] Tyquin, *Little by Chance*, p 118; and Butler, *AOHMS: Gallipoli, Palestine and New Guinea*, Vol I, pp 15–16.

locally. While substitution could be used for some items, it could not for others and in no area was the deficiency more pronounced than in the artillery.[76]

The Commonwealth's offer to raise the AIF was made on the basis that Australia would bear the costs of raising and sustaining the force. It is doubtful if the Government realised at the time what this really meant. The equipment for a single four-gun battery cost approximately £20,000, while the equipment for each of the 12 infantry battalions cost about £12,000. The costs associated with the division's single light horse regiment were estimated at £13,000 and this was before the price of their horses was added.[77]

Horses were a particularly expensive outlay and the 1st Division's Establishment called for a total of 5499. This was a considerable investment since the Commonwealth had until recently hired most of its horses for annual training and only in the last few years before the war had the authorities purchased 1500 horses for permanent use. The price paid by the Commonwealth for these horses was fixed by the Department of Defence and the average price paid during mobilisation was £16 per head for riding horses, £24 per head for artillery and light transport horses, and £28 per head for heavy draught horses.[78] Thus the total bill for the 1st Division's initial requirement for horseflesh was somewhere around £137,000.[79] The total cost of out-fitting the

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[76] For example the Army Ordnance Department had only 36 telephone sets and 2000 towels to equip the entire force; the field ambulances were authorised to substitute six general service wagons and three transport wagons for 15 transport wagons; and the shortage of motorcars and bicycles meant that these were purchased from men enlisted. In some cases even this did not work and in the 6th Battalion (AIF) the acting CO, Henry Gordon Bennett, purchased his unit's single typewriter at his own expense. JD Tilbrook, *To the Warrior His Arms: A History of the Ordnance services in the Australian Army*, Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps Committee, Canberra, 1989, p 41; *AIFO*: No 1; and Frank Legg, *The Gordon Bennett Story*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1965, p 22.

[77] These costs are based on information provided by the Minister of Defence in a ministerial statement a year before the outbreak of war. Commonwealth of Australia (COA), *Memorandum by Senator the Hon GF Pearce on Relinquishing Office as Minister of State for Defence*, Department of Defence, Melbourne, 23 June 1913, p 9.

[78] COA, *Journals of the Senate*, Vol I, 1914–1917, No 70 (25 August 1915) p 288. This cost is generally in line with pre-war payments, which averaged out at £25 per horse for the 1500 horses purchased in the three years prior to June 1913. COA, *Memorandum by Senator the Hon GF Pearce on Relinquishing Office as Minister of State for Defence*, p 9.

[79] This cost is based on the Government Estimates submitted on 3 December 1914 where a total of £475,000 was allocated for the purchase of horses up until 30 June 1915. The actual

division with its equipment and horses would run to a cost in excess of £500,000.[80]

The problem of materiel and horses was not only a matter of cost. In 1914 the British Empire was mobilising and the normal peacetime supply arrangements were being severely stressed. Although the use of the internal combustion engine was gradually making inroads into the transportation needs of the military services, all armies still relied primarily on horseflesh for their tactical logistics. Even the relatively small British Regular Army on mobilisation required an additional 60,000 horses and another 3000 to 5000 per month after that.[81] Although Australia was an exporter of horses to the Indian Army, there was an immediate shortage of trained horses suitable for employment by the military and not just any old horse would do.[82]

The military had specific requirements for its saddle, pack and draught animals and experience had shown that if standards were not maintained, a high price would be paid in additional animal casualties.[83] Without completely stripping the home forces, which it was not considered advisable to do, the 1st Division faced an immediate shortage of trained horses suitable for use in its artillery brigades.

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cost of delivering a trained horse varied considerably depending on the type of horse, where it was purchased and the amount of time required to train it. While the Commonwealth might pay an average of £25 per horse the Indian Army calculated in 1910 that a horse fully trained and delivered to one of its artillery units cost about £75. COA, *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol 75 (3 December 1914) p 1298; and Major RS Pearce, 'With the British Army in India', *Journal and Proceedings of the United Service Institution of New South Wales for the Year* 1910, Vol 22 (1911) p 91.

[80] This is based on a pre-war estimate that the average cost of equipment for a soldier in a mixed all-arms force was £20 per soldier plus the estimated cost of £137,000 for the horses. COA, *Memorandum by Senator the Hon GF Pearce on Relinquishing Office as Minister of State for Defence*, p 9.

[81] 'The Horse Problem in Time of War', *War Notes and Queries*, Vol 1, No 6 (19 September 1914) p 178.

[82] In the period 1904–08 Australia exported 66,982 hoses, of which 39,850 went to India. Between 1907 and 1911 another 38,203 horses were exported to India, the majority of which were for military purposes. 'The Horse Problem in Time of War', *War Notes and Queries*, Vol 1, No 6 (19 September 1914), p 180; and T Miller Maguire, *Gates of Our Empire: II Australasia*, Hugh Rees, London, 1914, p 19.

[83] British regulations required that horses for the artillery were to be good quality draught horses between 15.2 and 15.3 hands; aged between six and ten years old. Horses for the service corps transport were to be of the same quality but at least 15.3 hands high. 'The Horse Problem in Time of War', ibid.

It was initially requested that the military authorities in India dispatch 1000 trained field artillery horses to Britain for use by the AIF. To offset this loss the Australian authorities suggested that they could dispatch 1000 unbroken horses to India to replace those provided. What Australia had not factored into its calculations was that the Indian Army was also mobilising and it could not spare horses to meet the Australian shortfall.[84] Australia had to find its own artillery horses and train them.[85]

Nor was it only the artillery that had to train its horses. Other specialist organisations, such as the divisional signal company, also had special animal husbandry requirements since:

> *Horses for cable work need special qualifications and must be trained in the job. They must positively get to like having cable running on their ears and flicking under their eyes and feet. They must allow one to stand on their backs and not encourage blasphemy by walking off just as one is in position for making off a cable high up on a pole or tree.*[86]

A month after raising, the divisional artillery was surplus 34 personnel but still deficient 888 horses and this shortfall was only made good through Herculean efforts and the acceptance of partially trained animals.[87] The division's strength as it stood in October 1914 is shown below.

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[84] AIF, 'Progress Report No 4', 14 August 1914, p 2, and AIF, 'Progress Report No 6', 16 August 1914, p 3. NAA: 403985, A1194; AWM27, item 301/3; and 'QMG Branch Precis of Action During Mobilization', AWM4, item 1/43/1 appendix I.

[85] The difficulty training horses suitable for the artillery cannot be lightly dismissed. A project recently undertaken by a West Australian family as a living memorial to the Australian war horses, saw them procure and train a single six-horse gun-team. This took approximately five years to complete. Even the Indian Army, with its fully equipped and staffed Remount Farms, took between 12 and 24 months from the time it received an untrained horse before the horse could be turned over to a battery. *Remember the Horses*, Tahita Lang and Jody Robb, Margaret River; and Pearce 'With the British Army in India', p 91.

[86] Brig LH Harris, *Signal Adventure*, Gale and Polden, Aldershot, 1951, p 26.

[87] In addition the shortfalls for the artillery, on 18 September the infantry, divisional mounted regiment, engineers and divisional train required another 369 horses to complete their establishments. AIF, 'Progress Reports No 34 and No 43', 18 and 29 September 1914, NAA: 403985, A1194; and AWM27, item 301/3.

Unit	Officers	ORs	Horses	Remarks
Divisional HQ	26	70	57	Five officers and five ORs attached
1st, 2nd and 3rd Infantry Brigades (AIF)	396	11,955	768	
4th LH Regiment (AIF)	25	511	563	
HQ 1st Division Artillery	4	18	20	
1st, 2nd and 3rd FA Brigades (AIF)	78	2100	2112	
1st DAC (AIF)	19	564	686	
Engineers (HQ & 1st, 2nd and 3rd Field Companies)	27	767	259	
1st Divisional Train (AIF)	30	667	734	
1st, 2nd and 3rd Field Ambulances (AIF)	30	732	300	
Additional attached personnel	11	5		Chaplains and AAOC ORs
Total	646	17,389	5499	

Table 1: 1st Division Strength—October 1914[88]

The backbone of the Australian artillery in 1914 was the 18-pounder quick-firing field gun, of which the division was to have 36. As part of the post-Federation reorganisation it was determined that Australia required 18 field batteries equipped with modern guns, and these guns were ordered from Britain and delivered by 1907.[89] The 1st Division Establishment called for three brigades of field artillery, each consisting of three batteries with four guns to each battery.[90] All of the guns were drawn from Citizen Force units.[91]

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[88] Based on *AIFO: No 32*, 14 October 1914, p 5.

[89] SN Gower, *Guns of the Regiment*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1981, p 37.

[90] An artillery brigade was a unit-sized organisation equivalent to the modern field artillery regiment. The 18-pounder had been developed from the experience of the Boer War and introduced into British service in 1904. The gun had a calibre of 84 mm and could fire an 8.4

In addition to these light pieces Australia also possessed five 5-inch Breech Loading (BL) howitzers of which four were used to equip a heavy battery in New South Wales and a single gun was held in Tasmania.[92] In addition, four 4.7-inch quick-firing (QF) field guns were part of the 2nd Infantry Brigade in Victoria.[93] With these weapons it would have been possible for Bridges to form the howitzer battery and a heavy battery as laid down in the War Establishment unfortunately when the time came he opted not to include any of these heavier, older pieces. This decision was probably due to the limited number of guns available for home defence and their older pattern but it was also Bridges' mistaken expectation there would not be a great demand for high-trajectory guns on the Western Front. Despite representations made to him prior to embarkation, suggesting the guns would be useful no matter where the 1st Division served, the older pieces were left behind. It was a decision he no doubt later regretted.[94]

Fortunately the 1st Division was better placed when it came to its other main weapons. From within the existing stocks the ordnance services were able to draw a full complement of some 12,000 .303-inch rifles of the latest pattern.[95]

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kilogram shell to a range of 5960 metres at a maximum rate of fire of 20 rounds per minute (Gower and Hogg provide slightly different figures but not substantially so). Gower, *Guns of the Regiment*, pp 37 and 160–161; and Ian V Hogg, *Allied Artillery of World War One*, The Crowood Press, Ramsbury, 1998, pp 19–24.

[91] With the departure of the 36 18-pounders, the home forces still maintained 76 of the modern guns. CGS, Confidential Minute, 22 September 1914. AWM27, item 302/3; and Cubis, *A History of "A" Battery, New South Wales Artillery (1871–1899), Royal Australian Artillery (1899–1971)*, p 125.

[92] The 5-inch BL howitzer could fire a 22.7 kilogram projectile out to a maximum range of 4480 metres. Gower, *Guns of the Regiment*, pp 39 and 162–163.

[93] The 4.7-inch QF field gun could fire a 20.9 kilogram projectile out to a maximum range of 9970 metres. Ibid, pp 39 and 164–165.

[94] On 1 July 1914 Charles Rosenthal was appointed to command the Citizen Forces 5th FA Brigade, which was the first Australian brigade to be equipped with howitzers. A little over a month later Rosenthal was appointed to command the 3rd FA Brigade (AIF) so it not surprising that he urged Bridges to use some of these weapons when forming the 1st Division. Bean, *AOH*, Vol V, p 300; and Coulthard-Clark, *A Heritage of Spirit*, p 123.

[95] This left the home forces with 50,500 rifles of the latest pattern and another 50,000 of earlier patterns. From the 1890s Australian soldiers were armed with various models of the .303-inch calibre Short Magazine Lee Enfield (SMLE) rifle. This rifle was charger-loaded, magazine-fed, bolt action and was fitted with an 18-inch sword bayonet. From 1912 this rifle and bayonet were being manufactured at the Small Arms Factory at Lithgow in New South Wales. The first batch

Machine-guns were also taken from the Citizen Forces on the British scale of two medium machine-guns for each infantry battalion and light horse regiment, although these models were all older type Maxim guns. So while there were serious shortfalls in the provision of artillery support, at least the division could sail fully equipped with field guns, machine-guns and small arms.

On the other hand, except for the provision of uniforms, personal weapons and basic equipment, there were serious shortfalls in other areas that had to be quickly made good by local procurement or requesting items from Britain. One of the first decisions made by the Military Board was the allocation of £5000 to purchase medical stores and surgical equipment.[96] For the engineers technical stores were scarce and these would have to be made up overseas.[97] While there were sufficient vehicles for most unit transport, it was soon realised that transport wagons and other ancillary equipment for the Divisional Train and DAC could not be procured locally within the time available. It was decided that a request should be dispatched to the War Office effectively 'passing the buck' to Britain and asking that they provide 'the vehicles & harnesses for train transport of units, & also three wagons, telephone, & 91 GS wagons & harnesses to complete first line including Divisional Ammunition Column'.[98] This matter was passed to the Minister of Defence who six days later gave his approval and the telegram was duly sent.[99] Other lesser items such as 48 travelling kitchens, 1250 pair of binoculars and 22,000 ration bags were also not

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of Australian-manufactured rifles were issued in May 1913, although production remained low and most AIF soldiers during the Great War were armed with British-manufactured weapons. CGS, Confidential Minute, 22 September 1914, AWM27, item 302/3; Ian D Skennerton, *Australian Military Rifle & Bayonets*, ID Skennerton, Margate, 1988, pp 65 and 68; and Ian Kuring, *Redcoats to Cams: A History of the Australian Infantry 1788–2001*, Australian Military History Publications, Loftus, 2004, pp 21, 35 and 37.

[96] AIF, Progress Report No 1, nd (probably 11 August 1914) p 1, NAA: 403985, A1194; and AWM27, item 301/3.

[97] Judith Ingle, *From Duntroon to the Dardanelles: A biography of Lieutenant William Dawkins including his diaries and selected letters*, Judy Ingle, Canberra, 1995, p 86.

[98] Telegram quoted in AIF, 'Progress Report No 4', 14 August 1914, NAA: 403985, A1194 and AWM27, item 301/3.

[99] AIF, 'Progress Report No 10', 20 August 1914, NAA: 403985, A1194 and AWM27, item 301/3.

available in Australia and they were likewise requested from Britain, with Australia to pay for and collect the items when the division arrived in Europe.[100]

In some cases the British authorities could cover these shortfalls while in others they were too stretched to make up the Australian deficiencies. Hence the demand for 48 travelling kitchens could not be met. These deficiencies and others led to ministerial direction to locally procure an additional 359 general service wagons and ten light carts, some of which were available before sailing while others had to follow later.[101] That many of these larger items were not held in store in Australia during peacetime is perhaps understandable but even some reserve items of clothing, blankets and waterproof sheets also had to be obtained from British sources.[102]

The small number of motor vehicles and bicycles required for the division were obtained through local sources usually by purchasing them from members of the public who enlisted in the AIF.[103] This worked reasonably well in the case of the divisional units however, it did create problems for the first two mechanical units of the Australian Army Service Corps (AASC). The 8th Company, AASC (Mechanical Transport) and the 9th Company, AASC (Mechanical Transport) were not actually divisional units although they formed part of the first contingent, providing direct support to the division as the link between it and the line-of-communication bases. The 8th Company became the Divisional Ammunition Park, which dealt with the transportation of ammunition from the transportation hubs to the 1st Division, while the 9th Company looked after all other supply items as the Divisional Supply Column. Both units relied heavily on mechanical transport, needing some 200 vehicles in total, and this greatly

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[100] AIF, 'Progress Report No 7', 17 August 1914 and AIF, 'Progress Report No 12, 22 August 1914, NAA: 403985, A1194 and AWM27, item 301/3.

[101] AIF, 'Progress Report No 11, 21 August 1914, AWM27, item 301/3; and AIF, 'Progress Report No 22', 3 September 1914, NAA: 403985, A1194 and AWM27, item 301/3.

[102] AIF, 'Progress Report No 4', 14 August 1914, NAA: 403985, A1194 and AWM27, item 301/3. Approval to draw renewals of service dress, clothing and other necessities from the British ordnance department was received from the War Office a week later. AIF, 'Progress Report No 10', 20 August 1914, NAA: 403985, A1194 and AWM27, item 301/3.

[103] AIF, 'Progress Report No 4', 14 August 1914, p 2, NAA: 403985, A1194 and AWM27, item 301/3.

stretched local resources forcing the military authorities to make do with an array of vehicles. This was to have consequences as:

> *A very considerable number of these vehicles were of Continental Make, many of them even being of enemy origin. The Board failed to realise or did not take into consideration, the difficulty there would be in keeping up the supply of spares for such machines.*[104]

Complicating the task for the two commanders was the lack of knowledge and practical experience in how these specialised logistics units should be organised and employed.[105] The CO of the Divisional Ammunition Park was issued with six books:

> *…in which it was said that all details of the organisation would be found. Only one paragraph was found in the six books having any bearing on Ammunition Parks, and this stated that "ammunition must on no account ever be carried on internal Combustion Engine Lorries". The only thing left was the bare War Establishment giving the number of Vehicles for the various kinds of Ammunition and the numbers and Rank of personnel.*[106]

Fortunately there were some officers who had some knowledge of the experimental work undertaken in Britain before the war and their advice greatly assisted the formation of the units but could do little to assist with the challenges of training these units and the lack of mobilisation stations where these techniques could be practised.[107]

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[104] Col WH Tunbridge, 'History of the Australian ASC Mechanical Transport Branch in the Great War 1914-1918', p 1, AWM224, file MSS250.

[105] This was not only a problem in Australia and the relative newness of these organisations in the British Army meant that there was little experience at all.

[106] Ibid, p 2.

[107] Tunbridge notes that an Australian officer, Colonel Reynolds, sent him some papers on an experimental run of an Ammunition Park at Aldershot before the war and another officer sent a copy of the New Zealand Military Magazine in which there was an article on the new unit. Ibid.

FACILITIES

The two most populous states, which provided the bulk of the division's manpower, concentrated their contingents close to the capital cities and their port facilities, and this was a trend followed throughout the other states. In the 2nd Military District the New South Welshmen gathered at the local district HQ at Victoria Barracks in suburban Paddington before marching to nearby Randwick Racecourse. Although facilities were limited during the early stages of training, with the recruits being forced to sleep in their blankets in the grandstand, this camp at least had the advantage of being located close to the School of Musketry at Randwick and rifle ranges at Long Bay.

In the 3rd Military District a large camp was hastily established at Broadmeadows, north of Melbourne, on a privately owned property of some 200 acres located less than a kilometre from the main road to Sydney. The newly appointed Camp Commandant faced a daunting task although work progressed quickly. Even though the local shire had been trying unsuccessfully for years to obtain a decent water supply in the area, the military authorities managed to have over six-and-a-half kilometres of pipe laid and water flowing within five days. A telephone connection was also installed, post and telegraph facilities were established, and the nearby railway station was quickly upgraded.[108]

Despite these efforts Broadmeadows could not house all of the Victorian units and the overflow was accommodated further north at Seymour, while the engineers established a camp on the Domain near the Engineer Depot in Melbourne. This allowed the engineers to draw their stores from the Citizen Forces and to practice bridging on the nearby Yarra River.[109]

In the 'fringe' states the difficulties were lessened in part because of the smaller number of units to be concentrated. The Queensland-based units were

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[108] McMullin, *Pompey Elliott*, p 82.

[109] The Camp Commandant of Broadmeadows, Major Frederick Darvall, was a regular officer and despite the difficulties he appears to have done an exceptional job. Colonel James McCay thought highly enough of him to write to the district commandant praising his efforts. Col JW McCay (CO 2nd Inf Bde AIF), copy of letter to Commandant 3rd Military District, 19 October 1914, AWM182, item 1A; and Ingle, *From Duntroon to the Dardanelles*, pp 85–86.

concentrated at Bell's and Frazer's Paddocks, Enoggera, a pleasant spot on the western outskirts of Brisbane, eight kilometres from the city centre.[110]

In the 4th Military District the South Australian troops were placed under the command of Colonel GGH Irving and he was directed to raise a brigade HQ, an infantry battalion, two squadrons of light horse, an ammunition column, and the supporting and service elements. On the following day Irving and Major Charles Brand drove through the suburbs of Adelaide in a motor vehicle loaned to them by a wealthy South Australian businessman, looking for a suitable site for a camp. They selected Mr RM Hawker's 80-acre property at Morphettville as the most appropriate site, as it was well watered and accessible by rail. The camp was erected on and around the racecourse and was complete by 16 August.[111]

In Western Australia the military district staff held the first parade for the 11th Battalion (AIF) at Helena Vale Racecourse before dispatching the recruits to their camp in the foothills of the Darling Ranges outside Perth. The first volunteers who preceded the battalion arrived early by train at nearby Bellevue station, in the vicinity of Guilford, and on inquiring of the stationmaster found that he had not heard of this camp. A phone call to the HQ in Perth established its location and when the men arrived at the site they discovered it to be virgin bush. Soon after the battalion quartermaster arrived with several horse-drawn wagons laden with tents and the recruits set about establishing their camp—soon to be named 'Blackboy Camp'.[112] Likewise in the 6th Military District the Tasmanian-raised units were formed at a recently established camp located between the villages of Pontville (from which the camp took its name) and Bridgewater, with the camp being three kilometres from the nearest railway station at Brighton Junction.[113]

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[110] Harvey, *From Anzac to the Hindenburg Line*, p 1.

[111] AIF, 'Progress Report No 6', 16 August 1914, NAA: 403985, A1194 and AWM27, item 301/3; Kearney, *Silent Voices*, pp 20–21; and Lock, *The Fighting 10th*, p 24.

[112] This site was chosen as it was located well away from the distractions of Perth. James Hurst, *Game to the Last: the 11th Australian Infantry Battalion at Gallipoli*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2005, pp 4 and 10; and MO 465 of 1914, 13 August 1914, pp 20–22.

[113] MO 465 of 1914, 13 August 1914, p 22; and Newton, *The Story of the Twelfth*, p 17.

Again the problem of facilities was most acute for those units that were split across a number of military districts. Sinclair-MacLagan's 3rd Brigade had a particularly hard time with his units drawn from across Queensland, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia, and with his HQ raised in Adelaide, while he and most of his staff were in Melbourne.[114] Despite these difficulties the division's various elements were readied and dispatched by ship to rendezvous at the port of Albany on the southwest corner of the continent. From there the convoy sailed on 1 November. The 1st Division was on its way to war.

The voyage across the Indian Ocean was generally uneventful except for the destruction of the German raider *Emden* by HMAS *Sydney*. Although originally destined for Britain, problems of overcrowding and a lack of facilities on Salisbury Plain led to the fateful decision to divert the convoy to Egypt, where the division's training was to be completed. By the end of November the convoy reached the Suez Canal and soon after the division began disembarking at Alexandria. Slowly the units gathered at their new camp at Mena, on the outskirts of Cairo, and on 8 December 1914 William Throsby Bridges formally took command of the assembled division.[115]

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The creation of the 1st Australian Division and its dispatch within six weeks was a minor miracle. It was however, a planned miracle and the rapidity of its formation and dispatch was based on the outline plan that had been developed in the preceding years even if this plan was neither detailed nor comprehensive. Nor could these details have been worked out in advance since it relied on the Government's decision on whether an expeditionary force should be sent at all and if so how big that force should be.

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[114] BM 3rd Inf Bde (AIF), Memorandum 'To the Officer Commanding Q Battalion, 3rd Infantry Brigade, Australian Imperial Force (through the Commandant 1st Military District)', 14 August 1914, AWM27, item 303/211.

[115] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, August–December 1914, AWM4, item 1/42/1; and Admin Staff HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, August–December 1914, AWM4, item 1/43/1.

Although speedy, the mobilisation process was not without its problems and some of these were to continue to plague the 1st Division for much of its existence. A hint of some of the initial difficulties was highlighted in a confidential report prepared by the commander of the 1st Brigade after his departure from Australia. In this document Colonel Henry MacLaurin highlighted a number of serious flaws in the raising of the New South Wales elements of the division, and these equally applied to the other state-raised units.[116] Certainly the lack of a permanent supply and transport section on the HQ of each military district, except for New South Wales, caused significant logistics difficulties. This greatly increased the burden on the division's small staff and complicated the task of raising the division's logistics units while administering the training camps.[117] He might also have added a note on the transportation and equipment shortages encountered by the artillery, medical and logistic elements; the need for Australia to seek additional artillery horses from India; and the additional general service wagons being sought from Britain.[118] Many of these shortfalls would take time to fix, while others would not be fully exposed until the 1st Division was committed to battle.

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[116] Col H MacLaurin, 'Confidential Report on the Raising and Equipping of the First Infantry Brigade, AIF', AWM 4, item 23/1/3 part 2 appendix 28.

[117] 1st Div Train (AIF), War Diary, appendix II, AWM4, item 25/14/1.

[118] For a summary of the logistics issues addressed during the division's mobilisation see: 'QMG Branch Précis of Action During Mobilization', AWM4, item 1/43/1 appendix I.

CHAPTER 2

ORGANISING FOR BATTLE: DIVISIONAL ANATOMY

Training and organisation must always go hand-in-hand; for while tactical considerations dictate the organisation of units and methods of training, upon sound tactical organisation and training depend the development and effective employment of good tactics.

Sir Douglas Haig[1]

Most studies of military innovation in the Great War concentrate on technological advances or the role of doctrine as an agent of change.[2] Few have addressed the importance of organisational 'fit' and the impact this has on battlefield performance; but if armies are to fully exploit new technologies then these must be accommodated within purpose-designed and adaptive organisations—or in other words the anatomy has to be capable of evolving in the face of changing conditions.[3]

When the 1st Division mobilised it was raised on the extant Australian Establishment however, this organisation did not survive long and during its service the division was to undertake a number of major reorganisations, fundamentally changing the way it was structured and hence the way it was administered, trained and fought. By 1918 there was no part of the division that had not been changed and some had some diverged so radically that they were virtually unrecognisable as the same organisation that had gone to war four years earlier. This chapter will chart those changes.

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[1] Lt Col JH Boraston (ed), *Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches*, JM Dent, London, 1919, p 346.

[2] For example see: Shelford Bidwell and Dominick Graham, *Fire-Power: British Army Weapons and Theories of War 1904–1945*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1982; Timothy T Lupfer, *The Dynamics of Doctrine: The Changes in German Tactical Doctrine During the First World War*: Leavenworth Papers No 4, Combat Studies Institute, Fort Leavenworth, 1981; and Tim Travers, *How the War Was Won: Command and Technology in the British Army, 1917–1918*, Routledge, London, 1992.

[3] Merritt Roe Smith, 'Introduction'', in Merritt Roe Smith (ed), *Military Expertise and Technological Change: Perspectives on the American Experience*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, 1985, pp 2–3; and Stephen Biddle, 'Victory Misunderstood: What the Gulf War Tells Us about the Future of Conflict', *International Security*, Vol 21, No 2 (Fall 1996) pp 139–179.

COALITIONS AND ORGANISATION

When the 1st Division was raised in 1914 it was organised as an infantry division of the British Army. Although it was to be capable of conducting independent operations, its capacity was limited and it was designed to fit within a larger corps organisation that could provide the full range of combat and administrative support.[4] It was just such an organisation that the division joined when it arrived in Egypt, becoming part of Lieutenant General Sir William Birdwood's Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC).[5]

Unique or significantly different organisations complicate the task of training, administering and controlling large military forces. The more homogeneous an organisation, the easier it is to supply and train it. When the 1st Division deployed to Gallipoli in 1915 it did so as part of the ANZAC, which was part of Ian Hamilton's Mediterranean Expeditionary Force (MEF). Both of these higher organisations were British. It was a similar situation when the 1st Division deployed to France in 1916 as part of I ANZAC, joining Douglas Haig's British Expeditionary Force (BEF). The 1st Division remained a national formation but its organisation always mirrored British organisational models. While this was less important on Gallipoli, it was crucial on the Western Front. In France divisions moved in and out of the line constantly, frequently changing corps, and they needed to do this with the least possible confusion. Simply put, an Australian division had to be able to easily replace a British, Canadian or New Zealand division. From a nationalist perspective this might have its disadvantages, from a strictly military perspective conformity was crucial. While the British failure to sometimes appreciate dominion national sensitivities may have been a little arrogant, pragmatically the ability to interchange formations

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[4] A British 'army corps' in 1914 was composed of two divisions with a signals cable section. A lieutenant general normally commanded the corps with a HQ consisting of 18 officers and 71 ORs. Although the number of divisions under the corps remained nominally at two, as the British Army grew so too did the corps and depending on the task it might command three, four or in some cases five divisions and a range of 'corps troops' such as cavalry, bicycle, mortar and medium and heavy artillery units. Maj AF Becke, *Order of Battle of Divisions: Part 4—The Army Council, GHQs, Armies and Corps, 1914–1918*, HMSO, London, 1945 (hereafter referred to as Becke, *OOB: Part 4*).

[5] For a brief overview of the non-divisional units raised by the AIF see: Graham Wilson, 'The Relevance of Miscellany Administrative, Support and Logistic Units of the AIF', S*abretache*, Vol XLIV, No 1 (March 2003) pp 53–72.

effortlessly was of inestimable value to the Empire's coalition and the Empire's formations were able to achieve a remarkable degree of interoperability.[6]

1914—A DIVISION IS BORN

Back in Australia in 1914 after the size of the 1st Division was fixed, the Chief of the General Staff (CGS) directed that it be organised on the extant Australian War Establishment.[7] This 1912 Australian Establishment was in fact based on the British Territorial Force Establishment, with some local modifications to reflect the regional character of the Commonwealth forces.[8] As with nearly every aspect of mobilisation there were a number of immediate modifications to the theoretical structure and these were advised in a series of general orders that Bridges raised among his first directives.[9] Most of these changes revolved around reductions to the artillery complement and a few were due to shortages of some particular items of equipment.[10]

The 1st Division was a combat formation with a mix of the fighting arms and supporting services. Its fighting troops were the light horse, artillery, engineers and infantry. It was these arms that were expected to cooperate on the battlefield because the 'full power of an army can be exerted only when all its

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[6] Charles Bean stressed the importance of organisational conformity for the British Empire forces particularly on the Western Front where set sectors had been established so that units and formations could be rotated into and out-of the line on a regular basis. Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 94–96 and 137.

[7] The composition of Australian formations and units was laid down in a series of 'Establishment' documents that authorised how units were to be organised, the strength the unit was permitted to recruit to and what equipment it was entitled to hold. Due to peacetime economies the Peace Establishment (PE) was generally smaller and units were often deprived of the full range of equipment and support that they would require on operations, while the War Establishment (WE) was designed to provide the unit with everything it required once it mobilised. CGS Diary of Events, 10 August 1914, AWM, item 1/1/1 Part 1.

[8] The Territorial Force divisional WE included a mounted regiment (titled yeomanry), three field artillery brigades, a howitzer brigade (5-inch howitzers) and a heavy battery (4.7-inch guns). The 1912 Australian WE provided for only two light horse squadrons as the divisional mounted troops, three field brigades, and a single howitzer battery or a single heavy battery. Becke, *OOB: Part 2A*, Appendix 1, p 150; and Australian Military Forces, *War Establishments of the Australian Military Forces: 1912*, J Kemp, Melbourne, 1912, pp 1 and 11 (hereafter referred to as AMF, *WE AMF, 1912*).

[9] *AIFO*: No 1, 19 August 1914.

[10] To reflect the smaller artillery complement the DAC was reduced by 24 drivers, 48 draft horses and eight GS wagons. *AIFO*: No 1, 19 August 1914.

parts act in close combination'.[11] Of the prescribed fighting arms the 1st Division included a divisional mounted regiment, three field artillery brigades, three field engineer companies and three infantry brigades.[12]

The service-corps elements of the 1st Division were responsible for all personnel administration and logistics. The key organisations were the 1st Divisional Train, which was responsible for supply of all items less ammunition; the three brigade ammunition columns and the 1st Divisional Ammunition Column, which between them were responsible for all natures of ammunition; and the three field ambulances, which provided medical support.

The General Officer Commanding (GOC) commanded the whole organisation and a small HQ supported him. Divisional HQ in the early twentieth century was a remarkably lean organisation. It had an Establishment of just 21 officers and 86 soldiers, although this figure did not include the separate and usually collocated HQs of the divisional artillery and engineers.[13] On 15 August 1914 Bridges was promoted major general to take up the dual appointments of Commander of the AIF and GOC 1st Australian Division.[14] He immediately looked to appoint his key staff, all of whom were to be regulars.

Bridges' HQ staff was divided into three groups. The 'General Staff' (or 'G' staff) was responsible for the conduct of operations including intelligence and training. This staff included just three officers supported by a number of clerks. The senior officer was the General Staff Officer Grade One (GSO1) who was in effect the chief of staff. It was the GSO1's responsibility to supervise and oversee all of the staff; working out the plans of operations, including movements, embarkation and landings; security; camps and billeting;

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[11] GS, *FSR Part I (1914)*, p 14.

[12] FW Perry, *Order of Battle of Divisions Part 5A: The Divisions of Australia, Canada and New Zealand and Those in East Africa*, Ray Westlake, Newport Gwent, 1992, pp 12–13 (hereafter referred to as Perry, *OOB: Part 5A*).

[13] There were also two additional officers who travelled with the HQ but they were not a part of the divisional staff. The Director Medical Services (Colonel William 'Mo' Williams) and Assistant Director of Remounts (Lieutenant Colonel William 'Bill' Smith) were both AIF appointments. *AIFO*: No 31, 12 October 1914.

[14] While British doctrine indicated that either a lieutenant general or a major general could command a division, it was common practice to appoint only major generals to that command.

communications; drafting dispatches; and any political work with civilian populations. For this demanding position Bridges selected Cyril Brudenell White, who was promoted lieutenant colonel to take up the appointment. The second G Staff officer was the GSO Grade Two (GSO2) who was responsible for drafting orders and instructions; war organisation and establishments; billeting; and efficiency and training. For this position Bridges selected a British regular and staff college graduate—Major Duncan Glasford. The GSO Grade Three (GSO3) was the junior of the three G staff and his responsibilities included intelligence; maps, plans and sketches; guides and interpreters; and censorship. This appointment went to Major Thomas Blamey, another Australian regular, who was at that time in Britain on attachment having recently completed Staff College in India.[15]

The administrative staff comprised two separate branches that, because of the nature of their duties, worked closely together. The first was the staff of the Adjutant General (or 'A' staff), the second was the staff of the Quartermaster General (or 'Q' staff).[16] The A staff dealt with all personnel issues and as such was responsible for discipline, pay and conditions of service. The Q staff was concerned with what today is classified as logistics and was responsible for movement, supply, maintenance and quartering.

Heading the A&Q Staff was the Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General (AAQMG), Colonel Victor Sellheim. Sellheim's chief subordinate for personnel was the Deputy Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General (DAAQMG). In 1914 this appointment went to Lieutenant Colonel William Patterson. Patterson was responsible for the supply of military personnel, strength returns and personnel distribution, casualties and invaliding, promotions and appointments, personal services, burial matters, policing and the A&Q registry. The chief logistics officer, the Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General (DAQMG), was an Australian-born, ex-British Army officer Major John Gellibrand, who had been a classmate of Brudenell White at Camberley. Working closely with Gellibrand

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[15] 'Table Showing Allotment of Duties in General Staff Branch', *AIFO*: No 40, 15 November 1914.

[16] In practice at divisional and lower levels the staff operated in two functional groups: the G staff and the A&Q staff.

was the Deputy Assistant Director of Ordnance Services (DADOS), Major John Austin, a British regular on loan to Australia. He oversaw the provision of almost everything that the division's soldiers required in the field except rations, becoming the division's key conduit into the British supply system.[17]

In addition to the dedicated A&Q staff there were a number of other officers who headed separate administrative departments although their responsibilities fell under the AAQMG. The first of these, heading the medical services was the Assistant Director Medical Services (ADMS). The first ADMS was Colonel Charles Ryan, a long-serving Citizen Forces officer. He was to deal with all technical questions of medical administration; the disposal of sick and wounded; recommendations regarding preventative and remedial health measures; and the provision of medical equipment. Assisting the ADMS was the Deputy Assistant Director Medical Services (DADMS) who was both the medical officer for divisional HQ and who also dealt with sanitation within the divisional area. The DADMS was Lieutenant Colonel George Marshall, another pre-war part-time officer.[18]

In addition to the autonomous departments there were also a number of additional staff who were responsible to the GOC for specific services within the division. The Assistant Provost Marshal (APM)—its chief military policeman—was a special appointment. The 1st Division, following British practice maintained a small staff of mounted and foot police, although their duties covered far more than the enforcement of discipline in the rear areas, and included responsibility for rounding-up and detaining deserters and illegal absentees, collecting stragglers, investigating crime, traffic control and handling prisoners of war.[19] The first APM was Lieutenant (later Captain) The Maquis

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[17] Because of the range of his responsibilities the DADOS was nicknamed 'Department appertaining to Dirty Old Shirts'. JM Arthur and WS Ramson (eds), *WH Digger Dialects*, Oxford University Press in association with the Australian War Memorial, Melbourne, 1990, p 58; and Lt Col J Austin (DADOS), diary entry, 24 April 1915, p 7, SLV: MS10705, item 3.

[18] 'Duties and Channel of Responsibility for Medical Staff, 1st Australian Division', *AIFO*: No 40, 15 November 1914.

[19] Strictly speaking the British Corps of Military Police (CMP) was not formed until 1926 but the Military Mounted Police (MMP) and the Military Foot Police (MFP) were often collectively referred to under the title of 'Corps of Military Police' or 'Military Police Corps'. GD Sheffield, 'The Operational Role of British Military Police on the Western Front, 1914–18', in Griffith (ed),

Sorgius Mortimer Emmanuel Rovaol de Longueville De Bucy. De Bucy was an ex-British regular who at the time was serving in Australia. The other specialist staff included the field cashier who was responsible for the receipt and acquittal of pay for the division's soldiers, and at least initially he was also responsible for the payment of any goods and services supplied to the division from outside the military system. This could cover anything from the hiring of facilities or purchase of training aids to the payment of damages to civilian property. Although the HQ was a small organisation in comparison with its more modern counterpart it oversaw all of the division's myriad activities and units.[20]

The senior divisional unit was its mounted regiment—the 4th Light Horse (LH) Regiment. This unit was the division's 'eyes and ears' and although it had only just under half the manpower of an infantry battalion, it was fully mounted providing a reconnaissance capability and a handy mobile reserve. Next in precedence was the division's artillery—'the gunners'.[21]

The Commander Divisional Artillery (CDA) was Colonel Joseph Talbot Hobbs a long-serving, part-time soldier. Hobbs maintained his own small staff and he was responsible for the technical proficiency of the division's three field artillery brigades.[22] Each of these brigades consisted of three four-gun batteries supported by a brigade ammunition column.[23]

While the field batteries were equipped with the excellent 18-pounder gun, the problem with the Australian artillery lay less with its equipment and more with its tactical thinking. Pre-war gunnery practices emphasised direct-fire support,

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British Fighting Methods in the Great War, p 71 fn11; and War Office, *Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire During the Great War 1914-1920*, p 642. For the development of the Australian military police see: Glenn Wahlert, *The Other Enemy? Australian Soldiers and the Military Police*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2000.

[20] The HQ transportation assets included 57 horses, two horse-drawn vehicles, and four motorcars. This varied slightly from the British Establishment. GS, *FSPB (1914)*, p 6.

[21] The regiment had a WE of 25 officers and 511 ORs; 563 horses, 15 bicycles, and 14 horse-drawn vehicles. AMF, *War Establishments of the Australian Military Forces (1912)*, p 11; and *AIFO*: No 31, 12 October 1914; and AIF, *Tables*, 1914, p 25.

[22] The artillery staff consisted of four officers and 18 ORs; with 20 riding horses and two bicycles. *AIFO*: No 31, 12 October 1914; and AWM8, item 13/10/1.

[23] Each field artillery brigade had a WE of 26 officers and 700 ORs; with a total of 704 riding, draft and pack horses. GS, *WE of 1st Australian Division*, 1915, p 26.

which meant that the gun or battery had to be in direct line-of-sight of the target. This exposed the guns to retaliatory fire not only from the enemy's artillery but also long-range direct-fire from rifles and machine-guns. Although indirect-fire would slowly be adopted as the preferred and indeed the only feasible way of supporting the infantry, in the early days of the war the gunners lacked the command and communication system to do this. In 1914 communications were so limited that a battery was the largest fire unit in the division and the CDA and his brigade commanders lacked the means to coordinate or concentrate the fire of more than a single battery.[24]

Aside from the guns, each artillery brigade was supported by a brigade ammunition column (or BAC), which carried gun ammunition for its artillery brigade as well as reserve of small arms ammunition for one of the infantry brigades and any attached units. This left the Divisional Ammunition Column holding the division's reserve of ammunition so it carried both gun and small arms ammunition. When the 1st Division left Australia its artillery ammunition consisted of shrapnel shells only and this too was to pose severe limitations on the support the gunners could provide on Gallipoli.[25]

The Commander Divisional Engineers (CDE) commanded the field engineer companies and the divisional signal company. The officer selected for this task in 1914 was a British regular, Major Gilbert Elliott. Elliott maintained his own small HQ and unlike the British Establishment the 1st Division was organised

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[24] Bidwell and Graham, *Fire-Power*, pp 7–21.

[25] Shrapnel are small steel balls projected forward by the burst of a special shrapnel-shell, timed to explode in the air. The shrapnel shell of this period had a narrow graduated band encircling the shell, just near the base of the nose and with the aid of a special key, the band would be turned in relation to an arrow or fixed point on the shell. This operation set the fuse to correspond to a particular range, so that when the fuse was activated by the firing of the gun, the shell would burst in the air, about 30 metres or so before reaching the intended target, spraying forth a cone of pellets of near marble size. According to one Australian gunner: "In its heyday shrapnel proved very destructive to infantry, cavalry, and artillery in the 'open'." The reason why no other type of shell was provided for the 18-pounder was because the erroneous experience of the Boer War indicated that shrapnel was the preferred shell type for field guns and the most useful. This was not the experience of the Great War. Gnr H Monteith (1st FA Bde AIF), 'Observations of no 5886', not paginated, AWM: MSS0810; and Bidwell and Graham, *Fire-Power*, pp 84 and 97.

with three, rather than two, field companies.[26] These companies provided the division with the capacity to undertake limited logistic construction and field-engineering tasks. Most of the sappers were drawn from volunteers with civilian trade skills.[27]

The 1st Divisional Signal Company (AIF) was one of the division's smallest albeit vital sub-units. In 1914 this command went to Captain Harry Mackworth, another British regular. Mackworth had the dual responsibilities of company commander and staff officer since he was both the GOC's technical adviser on the signal services and responsible for all communications within the division. His company provided communications from divisional HQ to the infantry brigades and the divisional artillery HQ, and from there down to the infantry battalions and the artillery brigades. Internal communications within the battalions and artillery brigades were the responsibility of the regimental signallers who belonged to those units but whose technical proficiency was overseen by Mackworth.[28]

The core of the division was its infantry. It was the infantry that in the end had to prevail if the battle was to be won and it was the infantry that did most of the fighting and dying in the 1st Division. Throughout the war there were three brigades of infantry and for most of the war each brigade contained four infantry battalions. Each brigade had an Establishment of about 4000 all ranks. Like the divisional HQ, brigade HQ was a lean organisation with an authorised strength of 25 all ranks, including just four officers. Australian infantry brigade commanders were colonels until 1915 when their rank was raised to brigadier general to bring them into line with their British counter-parts.[29]

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[26] The CDE's staff consisted of three officers and 10 ORs; eight horses, two two-wheeled carts, and a bicycle. GS, *FSPB (1914)*, p 6; AWM8, item 14/7/1; and *AIFO*: No 31, 12 October 1914.

[27] Each company had a WE of six officers and 200 ORs; 57 horses, 33 bicycles, and 15 horse-drawn vehicles. *AIFO*: No 31, 12 October 1914; AIF, *Tables*, 1914, p 18; and GS, *WE of 1st Australian Division*, 1915, pp 46–47.

[28] The divisional signal company had a WE of six officers and 157 ORs; 80 horses, nine motorcycles, 32 bicycles, and 12 horse-drawn vehicles. *AIFO*: No 31, 12 October 1914; AIF, *Tables*, 1914, p 19; GS, *WE of 1st Australian Division*, 1915, p 61; and Capt HL Mackworth, 'The Army and the Signal Service', *CMJ*, Vol 3, No 3 (September 1912), pp 277–283.

[29] Brigade HQ WE included four officers and 21 ORs; 20 horses and two horse-drawn vehicles. *AIFO*: No 31, 12 October 1914; and AIF, *Tables*, 1914, p 20.

In 1914 the division raised 12 infantry battalions and each of these had an Establishment of just over 1000 men. The battalions were initially organised around eight companies, with the company being both the tactical and administrative sub-unit of the battalion. Each 119-man company was commanded by a captain who was assisted by a colour sergeant. The company was trained to operate in two half-company groups, each under the command of a subaltern.[30]

The responsibility for command of each battalion was vested in the Commanding Officer (CO) who throughout the war was a lieutenant colonel. He was understudied and assisted by the battalion's senior major who was the unit's second-in-command (2iC). To oversee the battalion's administrative duties the CO was assisted by the unit adjutant, normally a captain. The other key appointment was the regimental sergeant major (RSM) who assisted with the maintenance of discipline and, at least in the early days, played a key role in training since most RSMs were initially drawn from the regulars. Finally, although representations had been made in the decade before the outbreak of war to increase the allocation, the British infantry battalion went to war in 1914 with just two Vickers-Maxim medium machine-guns (MMG).[31]

The meet the division's logistics needs it maintained both unit-level or regimental (first-line), and formation-level (second-line) resources. At unit-level each major fighting unit was provided with A&Q staff, transport and medical personnel to meet its day-to-day needs, while the second-line assets serviced the division as a whole. The second-line support included a number of dedicated units that provided organic administrative support, including the divisional train, the ammunition column, and three field ambulances.

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[30] The WE of the 1914 battalion included 32 officers and 991 ORs; 59 horses, 13 horse-drawn vehicles, and nine bicycles. *AIFO*: No 31, 12 October 1914; and AIF, *Tables*, 1914, p 21; and Lt ES Davis, 'Company Organization', *CMJ*, Vol 4, No 1 (January 1913), p 58.

[31] The machine-guns the 1st Division took to Egypt were a version of the Maxim gun, which had been modified by the Vickers Company and adopted by the British Army in November 1912. Gas-operated, water-cooled, with a calibre of .303-inch and an effective range of 1800 metres and weighting 18.1 kilograms, the weapon fired ammunition loaded in belts. Ian D Skennerton, *Australian Service Machineguns*, ID Skennerton, Margate, 1989, pp 15 and 20; and John Walter, *Machine-guns of Two World Wars*, Greenhill Books, London, 2005, pp 32–35.

The 1st Division maintained three field ambulances and they fell under the technical control of the ADMS.[32] The total ambulance Establishment was just over 250 all ranks with 24 vehicles, including two four-wheeled ambulances.[33] All of the unit officers, except for the quartermaster, were medical doctors. Each ambulance could be allocated to support a brigade or more typically the ADMS pooled his resources to establish a number of divisionally controlled casualty collection and treatment stations. While the ambulances were organised and equipped to resuscitate, stabilise and evacuate casualties, they did not have a surgical capability, as this was the task of the external stationary hospitals (later renamed casualty clearing stations). If the field ambulance possessed a glaring deficiency in 1914, it was the lack of provision for dental casualties. Next in importance after looking to the health of the troops was the welfare of its four-legged soldiers, upon whom the division relied for its transportation.[34]

In 1914 the division depended almost entirely on horsepower to supply and move itself. The care of these animals was the responsibility of the Australian Army Veterinary Corps. The chief vet of the division was the Assistant Director Veterinary Services (ADVS) and for most of the war Thomas Matson, an Australian regular, filled this appointment. While the ADVS was responsible for the 5499 horses of the division he was assisted by veterinary officers attached to each infantry brigade, artillery brigade, the light horse regiment, the divisional ammunition column and the divisional train.[35]

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[32] The concept of the field ambulance had come out of the Boer War when the British army sought to correct some of the inadequacies in the medical evacuation system. Australia adopted the field ambulance from the British model in 1906 as it fitted well with Australia's geographical and tactical military requirements. Robert Likeman, *Men of the Ninth: A History of the Ninth Australian Field Ambulance 1916–1994*, Slouch Hat Publications, McCrae, 2003, p 9; and Michael Tyquin, *Little by Chance: A Centenary History of the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps*, Army History Unit, Canberra, 2003, p 84.

[33] The WE for each ambulance included ten officers and 244 ORs; 100 horses, one bicycle, and 23 horse-drawn vehicles. *AIFO*: No. 31, 12 October 1914; and AIF, *Tables*, 1914, p 23.

[34] The 1st Division was not alone with this flaw and the BEF, when it deployed to France in 1914, did so without a single dentist. Tyquin, *Little by Chance*, p 85; Lt Col Sven Kuusk, 'Origins and development Royal Australian Army Dental Corps', *Sabretache*, Vol XLVII, No 3 (September 2006, pp 23–30; and NT Wright, 'The Genesis of the Royal Australian Army Dental Corps', *Australian Army Journal*, No 300 (May 1974) pp 26–27.

[35] The division's initial WE included 12 veterinary officers who were a mix of regulars and part-time officers. Maj G Heslop (DADVS), copy of Memorandum, 6 May 1918, AWM27, item 303/304.

The 1st Divisional Train was responsible for the transportation and supply of all commodities of supply, less ammunition. To fulfil this crucial task it maintained an Establishment of nearly 700 all ranks, more than 700 horses and 150 four-wheeled wagons—making it considerably larger than its 1914 British equivalent. The Train was organised with a small HQ, which included the unit's CO who was also the Senior Transport Officer, and his second-in-command who was the Senior Supply Officer. The unit consisted of four companies: a HQ Company (Number 1 Company) and three horse transport companies (Numbers 2, 3 and 4). Each of the transport companies was responsible for supplying one of the infantry brigades, while the larger HQ Company supported the other divisional units. In addition the Train also maintained a seven-man detachment of the Military Post Office Corps that was responsible for the receipt and dispatch of the division's mail.[36]

We have already seen how each artillery brigade maintained its own ammunition column to haul the gun ammunition and while this was a significant task, the remainder of the division also had to be supplied with the other natures of ammunition. This task was the responsibility of the Divisional Ammunition Column (or DAC). The DAC had a complement of nearly 600 all ranks and 700 horses and 90 wagons. It was organised with a small HQ and was commanded by a lieutenant colonel. The first three sections of the DAC supported one of the infantry brigades, while the fourth section hauled ammunition for the rest of the division's units. The organisation of the 1st Division in 1914 is shown below.[37]

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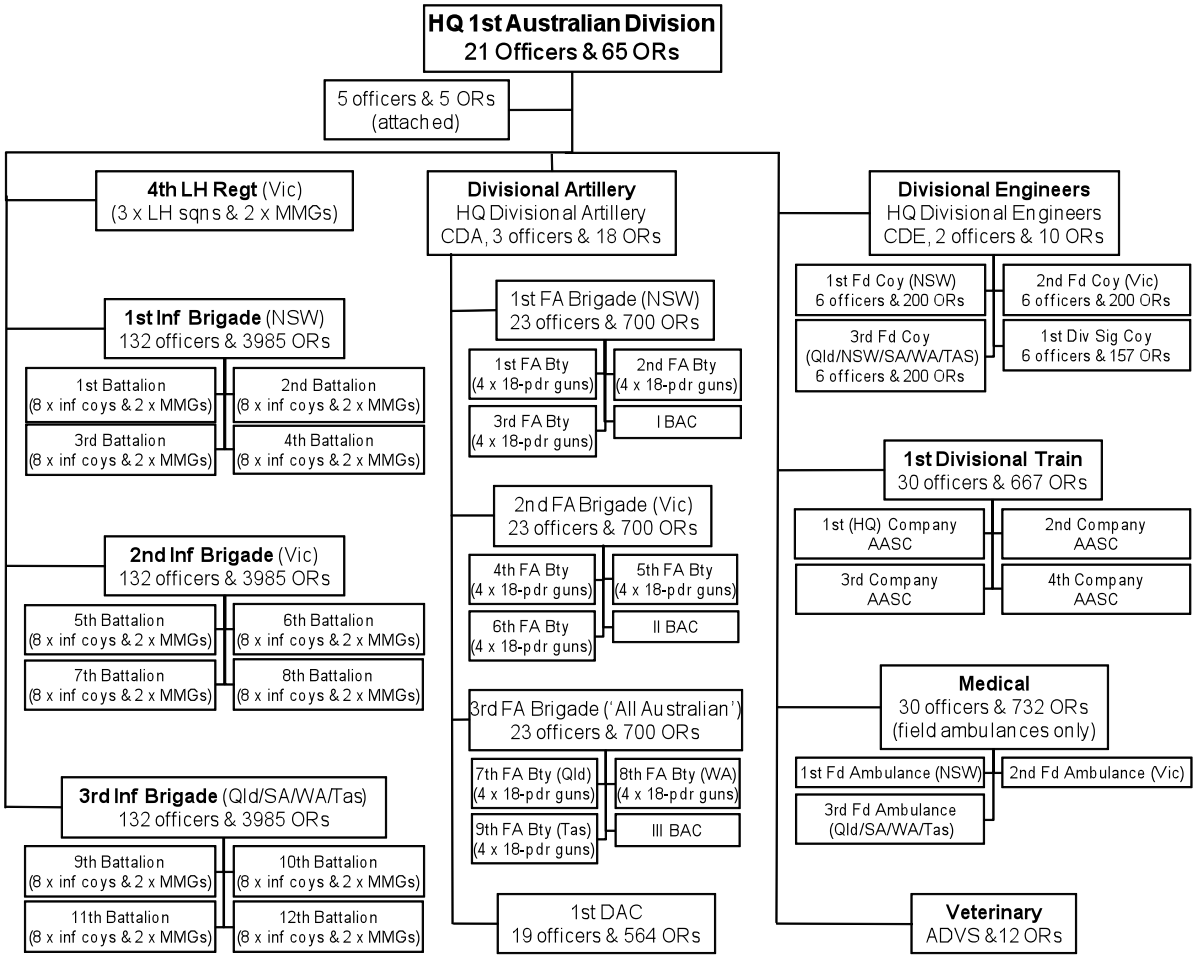
[36] The Train had a WE of 30 officers and 643 ORs; 734 horses, four motorcars, 30 bicycles, and 164 horse-drawn vehicles. *AIFO*: No. 31, 12 October 1914, Table XII, p 22; and AIF, *Tables*, 1914, p 22; GS, *WE of 1st Australian Division*, 1915, p 78; and GS, *FSPB (1914)*, pp 9 and 42.

[37] The DAC WE included 19 officers and 564 ORs; 686 horses, five bicycles, and 95 horse-drawn vehicles. *AIFO*: No. 31, 12 October 1914; AIF, *Tables*, 1914, p 16; and GS, *WE of 1st Australian Division*, 1915, pp 37 and pp 38–39.

1st AUSTRALIAN DIVISION—1914[38]



[38] Based on: AIF, *Tables*, 1914; and Perry, *OOB: Part 5A*, pp 12–13.

1915—STANDARDISATION AND IMPROVISATION

When the 1st Division arrived in Egypt in December 1914 it was placed under command of the HQ ANZAC and to ease any potential problems of interoperability Birdwood sought to ensure that 'matters involving alterations in organisation or increase of establishment or equipment' were made through the chain-of-command to his HQ rather than back to the Australian military authorities.[39] As a result the 1st Division underwent an immediate reorganisation so that it would, as much as possible, conform to the latest British Establishment.

The initial problem lay with the infantry battalions, which had been raised in Australia on the old eight-company structure. When the division concentrated in Egypt it was still Bridges' intention to maintain this, as the revised training manuals to accompany the newer four-company organisation were not yet available. At Birdwood's urging however, he ordered a reorganisation and on 1 January 1915 the Australian infantry was reorganised to conform to the British Army's new battalion structure and with this reorganisation complete the division got down to training.[40]

In addition to the internal reshuffle of the battalions, the infantry COs were also to become the beneficiaries of some additional firepower. As a result of their experience on the Western Front in early 1915, the British Army increased the scale of machine-guns from two to four per battalion, and just before the 1st Division landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula in April the Deputy Assistant Director of Ordnance Services—the ever dependable John Austin—succeeded in procuring a number of additional guns for the division.[41]

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[39] Maj Gen WT Bridges, 'Despatch No 7', AIF 1122/2/341, 8 January 1915, AWM27, item 302/44.

[40] Maj Gen WT Bridges, 'Despatch No 7', AIF 1122/2/341, 8 January 1915, pp 5–6, AWM27, item 302/44; 1st Aust Div, Div Orders Part II No 4, 9 January 1915, AWM: Gellibrand papers, 3DRL 1473, item 94; and Capt L Morshead, diary entry, 2 January 1915, AWM: Morshead papers, 3DRL 2632, item 3/1.

[41] Lt Col J Austin (DADOS), diary entry, 24 April 1915, p 7, SLV: MS10705, item 3.

Following the Gallipoli landings on 25 April 1915, heavy losses and the growing experience of the 1st Division's leaders accelerated the process of organisational adaptation. As the battle for the beachhead gave way to tactical stagnation and trench warfare, front-line COs came to realise that they had only a limited ability to directly control their unit. In the long and narrow trenches, both in attack and defence, there was little a CO could do to influence events other than throw-in reserves of men or ammunition wherever the line was threatened or attackers required reinforcement. To do this effectively the CO had to pull out of the direct fight. Under these circumstances authority tended to fall to the company officers, leading to tactical decentralisation and the empowerment of junior leaders.

At the same time it was realised that it was not necessary to pack the front-line with men in order to ensure the defence of the line. Gradually the trenches were 'thinned-out' with local reserves being positioned to the rear.[42] What COs found during the Turkish counterattacks in May and June was that given adequate coordination of fire support, particularly the machine-guns, it was possible to rely on concentrated fire to deny ground to the enemy rather than simply placing more and more men in the trenches. This approach was found to be particularly useful in vulnerable positions such as Quinn's and Steele's posts that were within metres of the Turkish trenches and often subject to violent grenade attacks. At these posts a packed trench simply offered more targets without contributing to the defence of the line. So just as junior commanders were being given more responsibility there grew a counter-prevailing trend towards the centralised control of firepower; although this process was not formalised until after the end of the campaign.[43]

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[42] For example in late July the 1st Battalion reduced the number of platoons in each company to three and at the same time it placed only two companies in the front-line and pulled one company out of the line and placed it in reserve. 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 25 July 1915, AWM 4, item 23/18/4.

[43] British pre-war doctrine allowed for the massing of battalion machine-gun sections at brigade level although this practice does not appear to have been adopted widely until just before the Gallipoli landings and the doctrine of organising brigade machine-gun companies was not formally promulgated until March 1916, after the withdrawal from the Peninsula. Col Hubert Foster, *Staff Work: A Guide to Command and General Staff Duties with Small Forces of All Arms in the Field*, Hugh Rees, London, 1912, p 143; Capt RVK Applin, *Machine-Gun Tactics*, Hugh Rees, London, 1910, pp 238–239; and GS BEF, *Notes on the Tactical Employment of Machine Guns and Lewis Guns* (SS106), GHQ BEF, March 1916.

Gallipoli also exposed serious weaknesses in the 1st Division's artillery. As has already been observed, the original organisation did not contain a single high-angle gun and the rugged nature of the position at Anzac Cove was to expose this shortcoming very quickly.[44] The few field guns that could be dragged up the steep ridges had to be positioned in proximity to the front-line often leaving them vulnerable to Turkish direct fire. While inadequate artillery support remained a problem throughout the campaign, a number of improvised organisations were created to try and offset this deficiency.[45]

In mid-May the ANZAC received a small number of Japanese designed trench mortars and a handful of ammunition, of which the 1st Division was allocated just two mortars and 120 mortar bombs.[46] Initially employed singularly, it was only after the failed August offensive that these mortars, supplemented by a number of others, were drawn together to form a composite mortar battery.[47] The 'Trench Mortar Battery (Provisional)' was formed in late August and organised around four Japanese mortars and included several other mortars of unknown origin. Of the mortars available it appears that the Japanese type, although of older design was preferred, as one veteran recalled:

> *This was easily the most efficient trench-weapon we had there, but we were handicapped by a shortage of ammunition for it. When we got the mortar we had only a dozen rounds, and dared not use many of them…. It had a range of about 400 yards and was very*

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[44] The 1st Division was supported by 7th (Indian) Mountain Brigade armed with 12 10-pounder guns but these guns were inadequate. Gen Sir Martin Farndale, *History of the Royal Regiment of Artillery: The Forgotten Fronts and the Home Base, 1914–18*, The Royal Artillery Institution, London, 1988, pp 2 and 13 (hereafter referred to as *History of the RAA: The Forgotten Fronts*).

[45] 1st Aust Div, Div Orders No 181, 17 August 1915, and Div Orders No 182, 30 August 1915, AWM: Gellibrand papers, 3DRL 1473, item 93.

[46] The MEF received a total of six Japanese mortars in mid-May and sending four of these to Anzac Cove. The mortars, which were based on designs dating from the Russo-Japanese War era, arrived with instructions written in Japanese and a very limited supply of ammunition, initially just 2000 rounds. The ANZAC was advised that it would take about six months to replenish the supply of ammunition. The 1st Division mortars were manned by volunteers form the infantry battalions. Lt Col J Austin (DADOS), minute to Lt Col CBB White (GSO1), 13 May 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/4, Part 5; Brig Gen CF Aspinall-Oglander, *History of the Great War: Military Operations, Gallipoli*, Vol II, Macmillan, London, 1932, p 116; Belford, *Legs Eleven*, p 104; and Hurst, *Game to the Last*, p 85.

[47] 1st Aust Div, Div Orders Part II No 93, 24 August 1915, AWM: Gellibrand papers, 3DRL 1473, item 94.

> *powerful. Previously the only mortars we had were two lengths of iron pipe, which fired jam-tin bombs by means of black powder charges and touch holes. They were seldom used, as they were nearly as dangerous to us as to the enemy and hopelessly useless as weapons of war.*[48]

Although the handful of mortars represented a welcome boost, the lack of numbers and insufficient ammunition meant they could not generate sufficient firepower to make any real impact, and this was equally true of the additional artillery shipped to the Peninsula.

Following the landings, as a result of requests to Australia and Britain, a number of heavier guns were shipped to Gallipoli and eventually the 1st Division was able to form the 1st Heavy Battery. This improvised organisation would ultimately contain one 4.7-inch gun and two 6-inch howitzers manned by officers and gunners seconded from the divisional artillery and the Royal Marines.[49] The guns themselves arrived separately, with the first of the 6-inch howitzers arriving at Anzac Cove on 16 May.[50] Like the mortars, these heavier guns were a welcome addition but neither organisation was sufficiently skilled or supplied for it to make an appreciable difference.[51]

The other significant change to the 1st Division's structure on Gallipoli relates to its dismounted troops. When the division sailed for Gallipoli the 4th LH Regiment (AIF) was left in Egypt to follow-on if the campaign developed to the stage where mounted troops could be effectively employed. When the campaign stagnated and infantry casualties mounted it was decided to send the light horse to the Peninsula as dismounted reinforcements. As a result the 1st,

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[48] VB Portman, 'Russell's Top', *Stand To*, Vol 5, No 1 (January–February 1955) p 17.

[49] The commander of the battery was Major Charles Miles and Lieutenants Eric Richards and Henry Coe assisted him. 1st Aust Div, Div Orders, No 163, 17 July 1915; 1st Aust Div, Div Orders Part II No 86, 6 August 1915, AWM: Gellibrand papers, 3DRL 1473, item 94; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, p 868, fn24.

[50] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 16 May 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/4 part 1; and Gnr L Gwyther (2nd BAC AIF), diary entry, 16 May 1915, SLV: MS11300, MSB401.

[51] The 6-inch howitzer, which was provided with a siege carriage to permit an increase in elevation, had a maximum range of about 6400 metres. The 4.7-inch gun had a maximum range of 9970 metres. Gower, *Guns of the Regiment*, pp 39–40, 42, 164–165 and 166–167.

2nd and 3rd LH brigades and the 4th LH Regiment were shipped from Egypt in mid-May. On 20 May the 2nd LH Brigade and the first squadron of the 4th LH Regiment arrived at Anzac Cove and these organisations were allotted to the 1st Division.[52] In the end however, these and the other reinforcements that were shipped to the Peninsula could not shift the balance and despite great gallantry in the heavy fighting during the August offensive the campaign remained operationally stalled. During December the 1st Division, along with the rest of the ANZAC, was spirited away.

1916—RECONSTITUTION AND EXPANSION

The year 1916 was pivotal in the development of the 1st Division. In the early New Year the division was concentrated back in Egypt. This coincided with a vast expansion of the AIF, tripling the number of ANZAC divisions.[53] At the same time the division's organisation was aligned with the British New Army Establishment. To achieve this the 1st Division was effectively split in two to provide the nucleus for the raising of another divisions' worth of troops, while simultaneously the division raised a host of new units. This prelude ended in March when the 1st Division, now part of I ANZAC, was shipped to France finally entering the main theatre of the war.[54]

At the same time the BEF in France was also expanding as its corps organisation matured. In August 1914 the British Army mobilised just three corps and two of these formed part of the BEF.[55] By March 1916, as the 1st Division moving to France, the BEF fielded 15 corps and would soon grow to

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[52] The 3rd LH Brigade (AIF) was allotted to the NZ&A Division. HQ ANZAC, ANZAC Order No 10, 20 May 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/4, Part 6.

[53] The 2nd Australian Division was formed in Egypt in mid-1915 and served briefly on Gallipoli in the wake of the August offensive. The 4th and 5th Australian, the Anzac Mounted and the New Zealand divisions were all formed in Egypt in early 1916, while John Monash's 3rd Australian Division was raised in Australia and assembled in Britain in mid-1916. Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, p 68.

[54] Maj Marriott-Dodington (GSO2 HQ I ANZAC), 'Memorandum on the Augmentation and Reorganisation of the Australian and New Zealand Forces', 23 March 1916, AWM4, item 1/29/1 appendix 3.

[55] On 5 August 1914 the HQs of I, II and III corps were activated. IV Corps was formed on 5 October and the Cavalry Corps followed on 10 October. Becke, *OOB: Part 4*, pp 125, 133, 139, 147 and 155.

19, including the two ANZAC and the Canadian Corps.[56] The increasing scale of British operations meant that the corps began to assume a greater role in the planning and conduct of operations, particularly with regard to the employment of artillery and the acquisition of intelligence.[57]

A significant task for the division on the Western Front was its role in the gathering of information and steady building-up of a comprehensive picture of German capabilities. Soon after its arrival in France the 1st Division issued a directive creating what was to become a multi-layered intelligence-gathering organisation that stretched from the front-line trenches through brigade and division and back to General Headquarters (GHQ).[58]

The 1st Division was to become both a contributor to and beneficiary of this intelligence system. In April as the division first entered the line in northern France, it directed its battalions to form scouting platoons whose observers, snipers and scouts were to provide information to the battalion intelligence officer, who in turn passed this on to the brigade intelligence officer (BIO). The brigade intelligence officer combined this data with any information provided by the brigade HQ's own observers and this was pushed to division. At divisional level the information was fused with that provided from artillery observation posts and compared with the latest aerial photographs provided regularly by the Royal Flying Corps. This information was not only passed back up to corps, army and to GHQ but relevant information was synthesized and passed back down to the front-line units in the form of daily divisional intelligence

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[56] Becke, *OOB: Part 4*, pp 163, 171, 177, 179, 195, 201, 207, 211, 217 and 235. XV Corps was formed soon after I ANZAC arrived in France.

[57] For these developments and the problems associated with the expansion of the BEF see: Andy Simpson, 'British Corps Command on the Western Front, 1914–1918', in Gary Sheffield and Dan Todman, *Command and Control on the Western Front: The British Army Experience*, Spellmount, Staplehurst, 2007, pp 97–118; and Simon Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914–18: Defeat into victory*, Routledge, London, 2005, pp 19–20.

[58] This process occurred gradually throughout the British forces although it appears that the Canadians were more adept than most of the British contingents in appreciating the importance of the intelligence function and were quicker to add dedicated intelligence staff to their formation and unit HQ. Maj SR Elliot, *Scarlet to Green: Canadian Army Intelligence 1903–1963*, Canadian Intelligence and Security Association, Toronto, 1981, pp 25–26.

summaries.[59] Although this system would become increasingly sophisticated over the next two years, particularly in the areas of artillery and communications intelligence, the foundations of the system were laid in 1916.[60]

At the other end of the spectrum there was a complete reorganisation of the traditional intelligence gathering organs of the division—its mounted troops. Initially a cyclist company was added to the division's Establishment in Egypt however, soon after arrival in France the company was absorbed into the 1st ANZAC Cyclist Battalion.[61] Thereafter the cyclists became a corps asset although from time to time elements of its companies were attached to the 1st Division. A similar change faced the divisional mounted regiment.[62]

At the same time as the raising of the cyclists, HQ AIF directed that in accordance with British moves the divisional mounted troops were to be reduced to a single squadron. This too turned out to be a transient change and soon after the division arrival in France it was advised that its squadron was to be withdrawn to form part of a corps cavalry regiment. This decision was prompted by the realities of conditions on the Western Front where there was a need to reduce the amount of forage that was being shipped to France and

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[59] Lt Col AH Bridges (GSO1), GS Memorandum No 21 'Intelligence', 4 April 1916, AWM27, item 303/175; Lt Col AH Bridges (GSO1), GS Memorandum No 24, 18 April 1916 and 'Notes for Brigade Intelligence Officers', 15 April 1916, AWM4, 1/42/15 appendices 6 and 12; and BM 1st Inf Bde (AIF), Memorandum 'Intelligence', 7 April 1916, AWM27, 303/175.

[60] For examples of divisional daily intelligence summaries see: HQ GS 1st Aust Div, War Diary, May 1916, appendix 25, AWM4, 1/42/16 part 2; and HQ GS 1st Aust Div, War Diary, April 1918, AWM4, 1/42/39 part 8.

[61] Cyclists had proved of utility in the Anglo-Boer War, particularly for scouting and communications work. Their success on the veldt led to a 'cyclist' movement within the British Army. In March 1916 HQ ANZAC directed the formation of a cyclist company for each Australian division. Birdwood suggested preferential recruitment for the 1st Divisional Cyclist Company from the 4th LH Regiment. Jay Stone, 'The Anglo-Boer War and Military Reforms in the United Kingdom', in Jay Stone and Edwin A Schmidl, *The Boer War and Military Reforms*, University Press of America, Lanham, 1988, p 69; Graham Wilson, "'Caught the Cycling Craze': AIF Cyclist Units 1916–1919", S*abretache*, Vol XLIII, No 3 (September 2002) pp 3–22; DAQMG, ANZAC CR No 136/117 Circular Memorandum No 32 'Establishment of Cyclist Companies AIF', 10 March 1916, AWM 27, item 303/30; Brig Gen CBB White (DAQMG), ANZAC Memorandum CR 136/117, 11 March 1916, AWM27, item 303/24; and Neil Smith, *Men of Beersheba: The History of the 4th Light Horse Regiment 1914–1919*, Mostly Unsung Military History Research and Publications, Melbourne, 1993, pp 44, 49 and Appendix 1 pp 159–223.

[62] BGGS, I ANZAC CR No G136/175 GS Circular No 6, 9 May 1916, AWM27, item 303/30; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, p 91.

growing concern over the utility of large numbers of mounted troops. As one Australian light horseman noted later that year:

> *They have great ideas of what we are going to do "when the line is broken". Mounted troops are a thing of the past in modern warfare, unless an absolute rout sets in which is not likely to happen on this front.*[63]

In 1916 this trooper was pretty close to the mark although the day of the horsemen and cyclists were not quite over and the 1st Division would benefit from their services on many occasions over the next two years. In addition to their nominated tasks of scouting and reconnaissance for the corps, parties from these units were also attached to the infantry divisions to carry out traffic duties, route reconnaissance and marking, prisoner escort, to provide ammunition fatigues, salvage, and cable laying and repair, water control piquets, and guarding HQs.[64]

Of even greater impact was the complete reorganisation of the division's indirect fire assets. Since the beginning of the war the 1st Division had maintained the lower pre-war Establishment for its artillery. This meant that each brigade only fielded three four-gun batteries, and there was no howitzer brigade or heavy battery as prescribed on the British Establishment. In February 1916 this anomaly was rectified as the division raised a new howitzer brigade of two batteries, each of four 4.5-inch howitzers.[65] Soon after however, these instructions were amended and under the revised structure the 1st Division's Establishment increased to include an additional four-gun battery for

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[63] Pte MP Blundell (4th LH Regt AIF), letter to mother, 1 October 1916, SLV: MS10485, MSB221.

[64] *AIFO*, No 107, 10 March 1916; Brig Gen CBB White (DAQMG), ANZAC CR No 136/90 Circular Memorandum No 22, 4 March 1916, AWM27, item 303/30; and Brig Gen CBB White (BGGS), I ANZAC CR No G136/175 GS Circular No 6, 9 May 1916, AWM27, item 303/22; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, p 91.

[65] The 4.5-inch howitzer had a calibre of 114 mm and could fire a 15.9 kilogram shell to a range of 6700 metres. Hogg, *Allied Artillery of World War One*, pp 24–27.

each of its three field brigades and the howitzer brigade was increased to include three batteries.[66]

The increase in the artillery brigades was accompanied by the raising a permanent trench mortar organisation.[67] In April 1916 the divisional artillery was increased to include a trench mortar brigade of three medium trench mortar (MTM) batteries (each of four two-inch mortars) and one heavy trench mortar (HTM) battery (of four 9.45-inch mortars).[68] This gave the division a total of four heavy and 12 medium mortars and although a welcome addition to its organic firepower the new brigade soon earned the nickname of the 'Suicide Club'.[69] Aside from this unenviable reputation the other issue that plagued the mortar batteries was command and control. The personnel for these batteries were drawn from the artillery and their creation saw the establishment a Divisional Trench Mortar Officer (DTMO) however, the batteries did not generally operate as a group and this officer, who was attached to the divisional artillery staff, did not command the batteries in the field.[70] According to one ex-mortar battery commander this left the mortar batteries as 'Nobody's Own'.[71]

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[66] The new batteries in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd FA brigades were the 22nd, 23rd and 24th batteries respectively. The 1st Division's new howitzer brigade was titled the 21st Howitzer Brigade and its batteries were the 101st, 102nd and 103rd howitzers batteries. ANZAC, ANZAC CR No 78/3 Circular Memorandum No 6, 18 February 1916; CGS, GHQ MEF letter GS113 to GOC ANZAC, 17 February 1916, AWM27, item 302/4; and HQ ANZAC, ANZAC CR No 136/84 Circular Memorandum No 23, 2 March 1916, AWM27, item 303/31.

[67] The resurgence of trench warfare in the Russo-Japanese War had seen the revival of the mortar and in the early twentieth century the German and Austrian Armies had developed a number of large calibre mortars for use in demolishing fixed fortifications. The high trajectory of fire and simple design, when compared to conventional artillery, made them ideal for use in the trenches. Gen Sir Martin Farndale, *History of the Royal Regiment of Artillery: Western Front, 1914–18*, The Royal Artillery Institution, London, 1986, p 367 (hereafter referred to as *History of the RRA: Western Front, 1914–18*).

[68] The 1st Division's three MTM batteries were designated X.1A, Y.1A and Z.1A MTM batteries and the heavies was designated V.1A HTM Battery. X.1A and Y.1A MTM batteries were formed in April 1916 and Z.1A MTM and V.1A HTM batteries were formed in June. Perry, *OOB Part 5A*, p 12–13. The two-inch MTM had a minimum range of 90 m and a maximum of 450 m The HTM had a minimum range of 550 m and a maximum of 1000 m. GS GHQ, *Artillery Notes. No 6—Trench Mortars* (SS98/6), GHQ BEF, March 1916, p 19.

[69] FOO, *The Making of a Gunner*, p 27.

[70] The trench mortar officer was on the WE of the division by June 1916 and the WE for September reflected that he was attached to the HQ divisional artillery. War Office, 'Headquarters of Divisional Artillery—War Establishment Part VII, 18 September 1916, AWM27, item 303/61; BGGS, I ANZAC 13/307 GS Circular No 44 'Artillery Re-organisation', 18 January

The expansion of the AIF in Egypt also caused major upheavals within the infantry battalions. As senior commanders were keen to maintain the territorial basis of the existing force and to exploit the *espirit de corps* of the original battalions, each of the veteran battalions was selected to 'father' a new 'pup' battalion. Under these arrangements:

> the 1st Infantry Brigade (AIF) provided the nucleus to raise the four new New South Wales battalions of the 14th Brigade (53rd, 54th, 55th and 56th battalions);
>
> the four Victorian battalions of the 2nd Brigade (AIF) provided a nucleus for their sister battalions in the 15th Brigade (57th, 58th, 59th and 60th battalions); and
>
> the 3rd Brigade (AIF) provided the basis of the four battalions for the 13th Brigade (49th, 50th, 51st and 52nd battalions).[72]

Accompanying this upheaval was an equally demanding task of raising a range of new infantry sub-units for these brigades.[73]

In Egypt each infantry brigade was directed to form both a medium machine-gun company and a light trench mortar (LTM) battery. The machine-gun company, of 16 Vickers machine-guns, was formed by the simple expedient of stripping the four guns out of each of the battalions and concentrating them at brigade.[74] The personnel in these companies were transferred to the Machine-

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1917, AWM27, item 303/35 part 3; and Farndale, *History of the RRA: Western Front, 1914–18*, pp 132 and 367.

[71] Lt P Royd Barron (ex-4th MTM and Aust Corps HTM batteries), letter to CEW Bean, nd, AWM43, folder A52.

[72] The 13th Infantry Brigade became the third brigade of the 4th Australian Division, while the 14th and 15th Brigades (AIF) formed part of the 5th Division.

[73] AIF, 'Diagram Showing Details of 5 Divisions and Methods of Completing Same (Infantry), nd, AWM27, items 303/6 and 303/150.

[74] The Germans had started the war with both independent machine-gun batteries (called sections) and machine-gun companies (of six guns with a spare) attached to each infantry regiment so although the proportion of machine-guns was similar between British and German Establishments, the Germans had already decided that the weapons were best controlled at brigade level. The British began reorganising their four-gun battalion machine-gun sections into brigade companies in September 1915 but this change was not initiated in the AIF until after the

Gun Corps and the officers and NCOs within this corps were to be treated as a separate organisation for appointments and promotions.[75] The light mortar batteries, equipped with eight three-inch mortars, were raised and manned by infantryman from their brigade. Unlike the divisional trench mortars, these light batteries remained under the direct command of their brigade. [76]

As well as the creation of additional units, 1916 saw the beginning of a number of significant changes to the internal structure of the infantry battalion. Training for selected personnel on the new Lewis light machine-guns began at the Imperial School at Zeitoun, in Egypt and issues of the new weapon began in early March.[77] Initially the Lewis gun was issued on the basis of four guns per battalion and organised as a single section of 30 all ranks.[78] The allocation of the Lewis guns was meant to offset the loss of the Vickers to the brigade machine-gun companies but as production allowed the number of Lewis guns issued increased, first to eight guns and then to 12. This additional firepower then drove internal changes and by late July the battalion machine-gun section had disappeared to be replaced by six Lewis gun detachments, each equipped with two guns. Under these arrangements every rifle company was provided

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withdrawal from Gallipoli. Applin, *Machine-Gun Tactics*, pp 196–197; and Army Order Number 414 of 22 October 1915.

[75] Each machine-gun company had a WE of nine officers and 141 ORs; nine riding and 43 draught horses, four bicycles, two carts and 13 horse-drawn wagons. Brig Gen CBB White (DAQMG), ANZAC CR No 136/51 Circular Memorandum No 13 'Organisation, Brigade Machine Gun Companies', 24 February 1916, AWM27, item 303/232.

[76] The 3-inch mortar, or Stokes gun as it was known at the time, was recently invented and still something of a secret weapon. It weighted approximately 50 kilograms, making it relatively portable, and it was capable of quick assembly and could for short periods fire up to 25 rounds per minute. It was a weapon ideally suited for the infantry use in the trenches with a minimum range of 155 metres and a maximum range of 400 metres. GS GHQ, *Artillery Notes. No 6—Trench Mortars* (SS 98/6), GHQ BEF, March 1916, appendix D, p 19.

[77] The Lewis gun was invented by an American and initially turned down by all armies except Britain. The Mark I version of the gun was approved in mid-October 1915. The Lewis turned out to be the best weapon of its type fielded during the Great War and although it was prone to jamming, it would eventually provide the infantry platoon with its own intimate fire support. Gas-operated, air-cooled, with a calibre of .303-inch and an effective range of 750 metres and weighting 11.8 kilograms, the infantry version had a 47-round drum magazine. Walter, *Machine-guns of Two World Wars*, pp 36–39.

[78] Maj L Dodington (for BGGS), I ANZAC CR No7/12/1Gb. GS Circular No 18 'Replacement of Machine Guns now with battalions by Lewis guns and the formation of Machine Gun Companies', nd February 1916, AWM27, items 303/205 and 303/235.

with a detachment and the remaining two detachments were normally held at battalion HQ under the command of the battalion Lewis Gun Officer.[79]

By the end of 1916 enough Lewis guns had been produced so that each company in the 1st Division now had on average four Lewis guns and the first direction was given that the Lewis guns were to be allocated to platoons for both training and operations.[80] This situation however, was not consistent throughout the Australian divisions and there were local variations employed by COs.[81] Even so, there was a clear trend emerging whereby many of the newer weapon systems, such as the Lewis gun and grenades, gradually filtered down to company and platoon level and came to be part of the standard inventory for the infantryman instead of the tools of company or battalion specialist.

In addition to the internal changes in the infantry brigades, the 1st Division formed an additional battalion of divisional troops, which became its 'jack of all trades'. Pioneer battalions had been part of the Indian Army order of battle before the war and they quickly proved their worth on the Western Front where the spade was as important as the rifle. As a result all BEF divisions were directed to form a pioneer battalion from infantry soldiers with trade and labouring skills. Although nominally an infantry unit, an engineer officer usually commanded the pioneers in the AIF and they normally worked under the supervision of the Commander Divisional Engineers.[82]

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[79] Capt CCM Kennedy (for BGGS), I ANZAC CR 94/1/68 GS Circular No 14 'Organization of Lewis Gun Detachments', 31 July 1916, AWM27, items 303/150 and 303/168.

[80] CO 8th Bn (AIF), Memorandum 'Re Attached G/1209' to HQ 2nd Inf Bde (AIF), 13 December 1916; and HQ I ANZAC, G130/83 GS Circular No 30 'Organisation, Training, and Fighting of Infantry Battalion', 16 December 1916. Both on AWM27, item 303/150.

[81] In the 18th Battalion (AIF) the CO recommended that when the 16-gun Establishment had been achieved, each company should only receive three Lewis guns and the remaining four be held in battalion reserve. CO 18th Bn (AIF), Memorandum 'Organisation of an Infantry Battalion' to HQ 5th Inf Bde (AIF), 12 December 1916, AWM27, item 304/46.

[82] AIF practice was different to the British Army where 'Pioneer battalions could often have a colonel with no pioneering or engineering experience posted as its CO.' KW Mitchinson, *Pioneer Battalions in the Great War: Organised and Intelligent Labour*, Sword and Pen, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, 1997, p 15; DAQMG, ANZAC Circular Memorandum No 11 'Organization—pioneer battalions', 22 February 1916, AWM27, item 303/88; and DAQMG, ANZAC CR No 136/134 Circular Memorandum No 43 'Organization—Pioneer Battalions', 15 March 1916, AWM27, item 303/89.

The pioneer battalion was organised along the same lines as the infantry battalion and was similarly armed so that in an emergency it could be employed as an extra battalion. While this was an added bonus for the GOC, increasing the capacity of the division, it was also another drain on the hard-pressed infantry battalions. As a result the infantry COs saw many of their experienced and more skilled soldiers drawn-off just at the time when they were also being called upon to form their own new, specialist sub-units. As unsettling as it was for the units that were trying to reconstitute and 'shake-out' before transferring to France, this draining process was continuous and even after the move to the Western Front these demands did not abate.

Aside from a temporary reduction in the number of field ambulances, the main medical development in 1916 was the formalisation of sanitary arrangements.[83] In January 1916, after the many sanitary problems on Gallipoli, a divisional sanitary section was established with the task of preventing outbreaks of contagious disease that often resulted from poor hygiene practices in forward areas. The sanitary section was responsible for monitoring hygiene within the division's units and in particular inspecting latrines to ensure that they complied with health guidelines, and for checking the water quality and chlorinating contaminated water needed for consumption by the division's personnel and animals.[84]

All of these new organisations and weapons were trialled during the BEF's first great offensive on the Somme between July and November 1916. While many of the innovations proved successful, the bloody battles also highlighted a serious lack of experience within the army in conducting large-scale operations.

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[83] Brig Gen CBB White (DAQMG), ANZAC Memorandum No 11/3/22 Circular Memorandum No 5, 18 February 1916; ADMS AIF, Administrative HQ AIF Letter 'Am 6528' to AAG AIF, 18 July 1916, AWM27, item 303/290; Brig Gen RA Carruthers (for GOC), I ANZAC Memorandum "Q" 194/1/30 to HQ Second Army, 1 July 1916, AWM27, item 303/289; and *Four Years with the First*, pp 8 and 12.

[84] The most notable member of the 1st Division's Sanitary Section is undoubtedly Albert Coates, the post-war neurosurgeon. Coates joined the 1st Division Sanitary Section in August 1916 from the 7th Battalion (AIF). Although his diary entries are limited for this period it is clear that he was involved in moving throughout the divisional area inspecting latrines and checking or improving water quality. Although not a glamorous appointment Coates obvious interest in medicine and scientific advances made him a good choice for the unit. Sgt A Coates, diary entries 1–2 and 17 August and 3–4 and 6 September 1916, SLV: MS10345, MSB198.

Too often commanders and their staffs proved incapable of orchestrating and coordinating the massively expanded army. For the 1st Division the experience on the Somme was mixed, with an initial success at Pozières in July followed by a savage blood-letting around Mouquet Farm in August. As the end of the campaign season drew to a close and the offensive wound down in a sea of mud and despair there was the opportunity for some serious soul searching; and for all the horror this bloody experience spurned a new round of adaptation.[85]

Perhaps no weapon system epitomises the horrific image of fighting on the Western Front more than the use of chemical weapons or gas warfare, as it was known. Introduced by the Germans in 1915, the British were quick to exploit this new weapon. From tear gas grenades for clearing trenches, to mustard shells for the artillery and chemical smoke for screening, the BEF embraced any weapon that could improve the effectiveness of their operations. In July this saw a Divisional Gas Officer position created on divisional HQ. Just one of a number of new specialist staff appointments, this officer became responsible for divisional gas training and defensive equipment, and he also became the point of contact for the offensive use of gas and chemical smoke as a screening agent.[86]

The fighting on the Somme also highlighted the often-inadequate coordination of scarce resources, especially firepower. This led to a change in the relationship between the divisional Commander Divisional Artillery—or Commander Royal Artillery (CRA) as he became known—and the corps artillery adviser, who was to become the General Officer Commanding Royal Artillery (GOCRA). These were more than mere changes in title and they recognised the new status of the GOCRA as a commander in his own right. Increasingly on the Western Front corps not only commanded additional medium and heavy

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[85] For the BEFs problems on the Somme see: Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front*, pp 23–32.

[86] HQ I ANZAC, Secret Memorandum 90/100 'Organization of Detachments for Smoke Production', nd, AWM27, item 303/150. Although not dated this document was produced in late July 1916. The development of gas warfare in the BEF is fully explored in: Albert Palazzo, *Seeking Victory on the Western Front: The British Army and Chemical Warfare in World War I*, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 2000.

batteries allocated for counter-battery fire, they would also direct the employment and tasking of divisional assets. HQ I ANZAC outlined this in August 1916:

> *As regards the disposition of the artillery the principle will be observed of placing at the disposal of Divisional Commanders such artillery as is necessary for the fulfilment of the Divisional task. The GOCRA who will act in close co-operation with Divisional Commanders will do this and will arrange for any co-operation necessary. The routine by which this will be done will be that the branches of the Corps Staff concerned issue orders or instructions direct to the CRA's of divisions; a copy will be handed by the GOCRA to the branch of the Staff concerned for transmission to the Divisional Commander.*[87]

Nor were the artillery the only arm to experience a relationship change. The Commander Divisional Engineers—now titled Commander Royal Engineers (CRE)—also found the Corps Chief Engineer assuming greater control over the tasking of the divisional field companies.[88]

These changes to the division's fighting arms inevitably required adjustments to the service support of the division. So just as the artillery and engineer commanders had to adapt to the new influence of corps, so too did the division's service providers. In particular:

> *The DDMS* [chief corps medical officer] *in consultation with Divisional Commanders will define the responsibilities of Divisions and determine the distribution of Ambulances….Any orders or instructions regarding the distribution of ASC units will be issued by "Q" branch of the Corps to Divisional Commanders.*[89]

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[87] BGGS, I ANZAC Memorandum S.622, 14 August 1916, AWM27, item 302/75.

[88] Brig Gen CBB White (BGGS), I ANZAC Memorandum S.622, 14 August 1916, AWM27, item 302/75; and 3rd Aust Div, 'Organization of Headquarters of Divisional Engineers', AWM27, item 303/132.

[89] Brig Gen CBB White (BGGS), I ANZAC Memorandum S622, 14 August 1916, AWM27, item 302/75.

To better support the flow of ammunition to the guns, the ammunition columns were overhauled. By May 1916 the brigade ammunition columns were reorganised and ceased to operate as separate organisations. After this reorganisation the three old brigade columns were re-titled Number 1, 2 and 3 sections of the divisional column, forming an 'A' Echelon under divisional control, while the Divisional Ammunition Column's Number 4 Section was detached as a 'B' Echelon under corps control. In operation this system offered considerable flexibility in providing ammunition forward to the guns and it proved so successful that it remained the standard practice of the British artillery into World War II.[90]

The 1st Divisional Train was also subject to a number of organisational variations. The first and most obvious change was one of designation and from February 1916 the HQ Company was designated as the 1st Company Australian Army Service Corps (1st AASC). Each of the other three Train companies were then numbered sequentially (2nd, 3rd and 4th AASC). Even more important than this cosmetic change of titles, was the strain that was being felt on manpower and horseflesh.[91]

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[90] Farndale, *History of the RRA: Western Front, 1914–18*, p 130; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, p 91.

[91] Brig Gen CCB White (DAQMG), ANZAC CR No 136/46 Circular Memorandum No 12 'Organisation—designation of ASC Units of AIF and NZEF', 23 February 1916, AWM27, item 303/263.

By the beginning of 1916 the expansion of the BEF was placing considerable pressure on the provision of horses and this led the AIF to adopt the British practice of providing two-horse teams for each general service wagon rather than the Australian preferred four-horse teams. To partially offset this change, the majority of the horses in the divisional train were henceforth to be heavy draught horses. Furthermore, the production of motor lorries allowed part of the divisional resupply system to begin to motorise, although at this stage this had not begun to directly impact on the 'Train'. Even so these developments meant that the Establishment for the divisional train was lowered to 471 all ranks and 445 horses; a reduction of over 200 men and nearly 300 horses, while it gained another 54 vehicles—a 25 percent increase.[92]

Any adjustment to the number of horses had a flow-on effect for the veterinary services. The first change in these arrangements saw the 1st Mobile Veterinary Section (MVS), which had been formed in November 1914 as a line-of-communication unit, allotted permanently to the 1st Division. Its task was akin to the field ambulance except that its patients were four-legged.[93] While this was a much-needed addition to the division's capability, the expansion of the AIF demanded the transfer of some veterinary staff so that detachments for the other Australian divisions could be raised. After this cross levelling was achieved, the number of veterinary officers in the division fell from its earlier Establishment of 13 down to just five. This reflected a similar trend across the BEF where the shortage of veterinarians led to a number of veterinary officer positions being downgraded, to be replaced by less qualified NCOs.[94]

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[92] The divisional train now had a WE of 25 officers and 446 ORs; 445 horses, five motorcars, 31 bicycles, and 218 horse-drawn vehicles. 'A Divisional Train (Four Horse Transport Companies ASC (Including Amendments issued with Army Orders Oct & Nov 1915)', nd, AWM27, item 303/259; and Brig Gen CBB White (DAQMG), ANZAC CR 136/37 Circular Memorandum No 9 'Organisation—Divisional Trains for 4th and 5th Divisions', 21 January 1916, AWM27, item 303/275.

[93] The initial establishment of the section was one officer and 13 ORs, including attached personnel but this was later increased to one officer and 26 ORs. Brig Gen CBB White (DAQMG), I ANZAC Circular Memorandum No 34 'Reorganisation of Veterinary Services Australian Imperial Forces', 10 March 1916, AWM27, item 303/302; GS, *WE of 1st Australian Division*, 1915, p 114; Lt Col Max Henry (ex-ADMS 2nd Aust Div) cited in Taylor, 'War and the Professional', p 30 fn54; and AWM8, item 27/1/1.

[94] Maj G Heslop (DADVS), Copy of 1st Aust Div Memorandum, 6 May 1918, AWM27, item 303/304; and Bob Butcher, 'Vets in War', *Stand To!*, No 71 (September 2004) p 42.

Of equal importance was the quiet revolution that was beginning within divisional communications. Although the organisation of the divisional signal company would remain much the same between the withdrawal from Gallipoli and its arrival in France, there were major changes brewing in the BEF. While the 1st Division deployed from Australia in 1914 without a single radio, from late 1915 wireless began to assume greater importance in the BEF's communications and by mid-1916 it was formally included down at divisional-level. By August, the previous arrangements were being replaced by permanent army wireless companies, which were formed specifically to provide radio communications between the army HQ and the subordinate corps and divisions. This system began a slow process whereby wireless communications would gradually become the norm at division and later at brigade.[95]

The changes of 1916 fundamentally reorganised the 1st Division. These changes highlight the tension that was at work within the BEF as it sought to accommodate the need for centralised planning of large-scale offensive operations while devolving the actual execution of battles. The way that these conflicting principles competed can been seen in the changes to the division's firepower assets and their control. On the one hand experience on the Western Front had shown that indirect fire was more effective if it was centrally controlled. This led to the creation of larger corps artillery staffs and the designation of the chief corps adviser as a commander in his own right. It was the GOCRA and his staff who were responsible for the growing size and complexity of fire-plans in 1916. This process was also at work with the other specialists such as the engineers, medicos and logisticians. In one respect this enhanced the flexibility of the corps commanders to plan operations, in another

[95] On the Western Front radio was initially only employed between GHQ and army HQ but by 1916 it was being used for traffic between corps and division. The sub-sections provided the division with six radio operators to man two short-range Trench Wireless Sets and another four operators for Amplifiers. The Amplifier could be used either for working to a Power Buzzer or as a Listening Set for interception of friendly or enemy wireless communications and it was normal practice to issue three Buzzers to each Amplifier. The British corps were directed 'as a rule' to employ two Amplifiers as Listening Sets. Buzzers on the other hand were meant to provide communications across a gap when other means of communication had broken down or it could be sent forward with troops in an attack into the enemy trenches. The approximate range of the Amplifier was about 1800 metres but they were subject to interception by the Germans. CGS, GHQ Memorandum OB/242 to First, Second, Third, Fourth and Reserve armies, 4 August 1916, AWM27, item 303/112.

it reduced the divisional commanders flexibility and left them less capable of conducting operations. The better senior commanders came to realise that while they had an important role in planning the battle they could not afford to micro-manage operations once battle was joined and the divisional commanders had to be allowed the initiative in deciding what tactics to employ.

Working side-by-side and against the process of centralisation was the recognition that if lower-level commanders were going to fight their battles they had to be given the firepower to enable them to do so and if mobility was to be restored to the battlefield then the brigades and battalions would have to be given the resources allowing them to fight their way forward without relying solely on artillery. The creation of brigade mortar batteries and machine-gun companies, coupled with the increasing allocation of Lewis guns, demonstrated that the BEF understood this dichotomy even if it was not always well placed to respond to it. The clash occurred because the lessons from the Somme in 1916 pointed to a need for centralisation as a means of marshalling the resources needed to achieve a breakthrough, while simultaneously the lack of experience in the higher staffs often meant that the conduct of operations was poorly coordinated and opportunities squandered through too tight a control.[96]

1917—CENTRALISATION AND SPECIALISATION

By the end of 1916 the BEF had grown to a force of 55 infantry divisions organised in five armies.[97] These mostly New Army and the dominion divisions gained considerable experience during the offensives of 1916 and GHQ looked forward to the 1917 campaign year. This year was also to see further major organisational changes within the 1st Division as the BEF improved its command and control infrastructure and sought to rationalise its formations and align their Establishments as closely as possible. Unlike the changes of the previous year, which generally saw an increase in the number and type of units

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[96] As an example of the command and control problems faced during this period in the BEF see: Gary Sheffield, 'An Army Commander on the Somme: Hubert Gough', in Sheffield and Todman, *Command and Control on the Western Front*, pp 71–95.

[97] This included nine dominion divisions (four Australian, four Canadian and one New Zealand divisions) and 46 British divisions. The 3rd Australian Division was at this stage still in Britain training. CGS, GHQ BEF Memorandum OB/1866 to First, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth armies, 16 November 1916, AWM27, item 303/35 part 2.

within the division, the changes of 1917 generally saw a decrease. It also saw supplanting of the division by the corps as the key planning HQ for BEF operations. While the division would continue to fight the battle, it was the corps that would increasingly be responsible for planning and control of the vital support.

Despite its changed relationship with the corps, 1917 would see divisional HQ undergo its most profound changes of the war. The operations of 1916 had taught the BEF considerable lessons and the complexity of its operations increased exponentially in the next year. In addition as the divisions adjusted to the new conditions there was a need for greater specialisation. During 1917 no less than six new specialist staff appointments were added to the HQ. Officers such as the Divisional Machine-Gun Officer[98], the Divisional Claims Officer[99], the Divisional Salvage Officer[100], and the Divisional Courts-Martial Officer[101] joined the divisional gas and trench mortar officers, reflecting the importance of both new weapon systems and the increasingly complex administrative arrangements that supported the BEF's developing way of war.[102]

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[98] The Divisional Machine-gun Officer was appointed in mid-June 1917. Maj Gen R Butler (for CGS), GHQ OB/407 to First, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth armies and XV Corps, 17 June 1917, AWM27, item 303/229.

[99] The Divisional Claims Officer took over responsibility for the processing and payment of external monetary claims. On the Western Front these claims arose: from the need to billet troops with the local civilians or the use of land for training areas; for laundry services; for local purchases such as lumber or for the payment of damages to civilian property; and for the investigation into the theft, loss or destruction of military stores. Claims Officer 1st Aust Div, War Diary, July 1917, AWM4, item 4/2/1.

[100] By the time the 1st Division was committed to the Somme in July 1916, I ANZAC had already appointed an officer whose sole responsibility was to supervise the salvage of arms, equipment and stores in the forward areas. This officer directed the efforts of a semi-permanent divisional salvage company, to which each infantry brigade provided a section of men. In early 1917 this improvised system was formalised with the creation of a permanent company. The Divisional Salvage Officer commanded the company, with a sergeant, three section corporals and 20 soldiers in each of the three sections. The company also held three horses, two bicycles and a single horse-drawn wagon. GOC, Reserve Army letter 723/3 to QMG GHQ, 15 August 1916, PRO: WO95/523; and AIF Order No 452 'Establishment (provisional) for Divisional Salvage Companies', 10 January 1917, AWM27, item 303/4.

[101] The Divisional Courts-Martial Officer was appointed to deal with the growing number of courts-martial and to ensure that these trials were conducted in accordance with the rules of military law.

[102] In early 1917 the DAAQMG's title was changed to the Deputy Assistant Adjutant General (DAAG). This change was instituted to better reflect the division of responsibilities between the members of the A&Q staff. Ellis, *The 5th Division*, p 14.

Two particularly important additions to the divisional staff were dedicated intelligence officers. Under the previous arrangements the GSO3 was responsible for divisional intelligence functions, although the artillery and engineer staffs were also involved in collecting their own specialist intelligence. As the BEF's collection methods and agencies grew, the GSO3 was unable to deal with the mass of material as well as his other duties. Just how sophisticated and accurate British intelligence had become can be glimpsed by the views of Erich von Ludendorff, the German First Quartermaster General, who warned his army commanders in late 1917 that:

> *From a map issued by the British Intelligence Service (that is, by the British General Headquarters (GHQ) in France), captured at CAMBRAI, it appears that the enemy was completely informed regarding the distribution of our forces in the line and the divisions which had been withdrawn.*[103]

To deal with the volume of material generated across the division and to ensure that it was applied appropriately within the divisional area was not a simple task and it was one that required a full-time, designated officer. The new intelligence officer appeared on the HQ in August 1917, on the eve of Third Ypres, but he was not the first new intelligence position to appear that year.

By January 1917 the War Office had approved the establishment of a staff lieutenant first-class as part of the artillery staff. This officer, titled the 'reconnaissance officer', was for all intents an artillery intelligence specialist. His duties related to the growing complexity of British artillery techniques and tactics and he was tasked specifically with carrying-out 'special artillery reconnaissance, to study and collate the information derived from aeroplane photographs and maps so far as it affects artillery, and to keep in close touch with the Royal Flying Corps.'[104] The need for this separate position was linked to the demands of counter-battery fire. Nor was the increasing intelligence effort the only challenge that the divisional staff faced.

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[103] Quoted in John Ferris, 'The British Army and Signals Intelligence in the Field During the First World War', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol 3, No 4 (October 1988) p 23.

[104] Quoted in Farndale, *History of the RRA: Western Front, 1914–18*, p 368.

The use of radio also made further inroads in 1917. Primarily because of their bulk and fragility, early radio sets were not deemed suitable for infantry division communications but as more robust and lighter sets became available, radios began to be deployed at lower and lower levels of command. Radio communications to the division were initially provided by the army wireless company detachment. In June 1917 this system was superseded and in its place each corps and division raised an organic wireless organisation—thus was born the 1st Division Wireless Section. By 1918 radio was being employed down to brigade-level and the divisional command and control was taking one more step from flags to wireless.[105]

At the same time that the BEF was harnessing emerging communications technologies, it was also revamping some of its more traditional forms. Until 1917 control of BEF pigeon lofts was exercised by GHQ. The increasing size of the service precipitated a change and in June it was decided that control of pigeons would in future be vested in the Assistant Director Signals at corps HQ; and he became responsible for distributing the equipment and arranging for the training of the divisional signal companies and brigade pigeon stations. Normally each infantry brigade was provided with two pigeon stations manned by a single 'pigeoneer' and a supply of caged birds. These stations were attached to the forward battalions and used to pass important message traffic back to division, since there was not intermediate station at brigade. Although it might appear anachronistic, the pigeon service was a remarkably effective, supplementing wireless, line and runner, and often proving more reliable.[106]

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[105] The 1st Division's radio section was provided from the I ANZAC Wireless Section and the section was eventually to be equipped with three Trench Sets, six Power Buzzers, four Amplifiers LF, ten Loop Sets and 12 Ground Antennae Sets. To man this 'high-tech' equipment the wireless section had an officer and 18 operators. 1st Div Sig Coy (AIF), War Diary, 28 June 1917, AWM4, item 22/11/25; Director of Signals GHQ, D Sigs/4411 to Third Army, 18 June 1917, AWM27, item 303/112; BGGS I ANZAC, I ANZAC G198/104 GS Circular No 94 'Wireless Communications', 25 October 1917, AWM27, item 303/112; BGGS, I ANZAC G198/83 GS Circular 'Communications—Wireless Organization', 28 June 1917, AWM27, item 303/99; and GS GHQ BEF, *Communications by Wireless* (SS141 OB/1284), GHQ BEF, March 1918, pp 17 and 20.

[106] BGGS, I ANZAC Memorandum 175/347 'Re-organization of the Pigeon Service', 25 June 1917, AWM27, item 303/99.

In late 1916 GHQ advised that there was to be another reorganisation of the artillery to ensure that in future all divisions would be identically organised. In January 1917, before the campaign season began, this intent was given form when GHQ provided instructions for implementing the reorganisation and the end-state to be achieved. In essence the reorganisation saw the division's Establishment reduced to two field artillery brigades, each of which was to consist of three field batteries of six 18-pounders and a single six-gun 4.5-inch howitzer battery. Even with the disbanding of some brigades to bring the others up to strength, the reduction in the number of divisional brigades provided some surplus brigades that became independent and these were designated as army field artillery brigades.[107]

For the 1st Division this meant that it would lose one of its original brigades—the 3rd FA Brigade, which was designated as one of the new army brigades. Its two remaining brigades were then brought up to strength by absorbing a number of the more recently formed batteries of the 21st FA Brigade.[108] Overall this saw the divisional artillery strength reduced from 12 field gun batteries (with 48 guns) to six field gun batteries (with 36 guns), and although reduced from three to two batteries, the howitzers still retained 12 pieces.[109]

The artillery reorganisation was accompanied by a further weakening of the division's control over its guns. By mid-1917 it was clear that even this radical revamping was not going to stop the divisional guns being detached from their divisions for particular operations. During its operations of Third Ypres during September and October, the 1st Division was stripped of its two artillery brigades and was instead supported by artillery groups formed from the artillery of neighbouring divisions. Obviously this could cause some command and

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[107] CGS, GHQ Memorandum OB/1866 to First, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth armies, 16 November 1916; and BGGS, GHQ Memorandum OB/1866 to First, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth armies, 21 December 1916. All on AWM27, item 303/35 Part 2. CGS, GHQ Memorandum OB/1866 to Second and Fourth armies, 15 January 1917, AWM27, 303/35 part 1.

[108] BMRA, 1st Aust Div Arty Order No 75, 21 January 1917, and BMRA, 1st Aust Div Arty Order No 76, 22 January 1917, AWM27, item 303/40; and BGGS, I ANZAC G13/351 GS Circular No 62 'Reorganization of Howitzer Batteries', 25 March 1917, AWM27, item 303/49.

[109] BGGS, I ANZAC Memorandum to Third Army 'Reorganization of the Australian Field Artillery', 11 June 1917; and Brig Gen CBB White (BGGS), I ANZAC Memorandum to HQ RA Fifth Army, 10 June 1917. Both on AWM27, item 303/35 part 1.

control problems and to alleviate any confusion, instructions were issued on what elements of the divisional artillery HQ were to accompany the division's guns when they were detached and what was to remain. In short the CRA was always meant to remain at the disposal of his GOC however, if the CRA was called upon to command a detached artillery group, of which his own artillery was not part, then his HQ was to be split with the Brigade Major, Royal Artillery (BMRA) remaining with the CRA, while the Staff Captain, Royal Artillery (SCRA) and a cable detachment were to remain with the division's guns. In this way the divisional artillery HQ could continue to function while the SCRA provided assistance to the general commanding the artillery group to which the divisional artillery was attached.[110]

Not only had the internal and external artillery organisation matured by 1917, so had the equipment of the gunners. Although the main pieces of the divisional artillery—the 18-pounder and the 4.5-inch howitzer—were still the same, the development of new projectiles had greatly increased their functionality and lethality. It will be recalled that in 1914 the 1st Division's field guns were supplied only with shrapnel rounds. By 1917 the 106 fuse had been developed for use with High Explosive.[111] Supporting this innovation was the development of a range of other shells, which, as one gunner recalled, gave great flexibility:

> *The high-explosive or "HE" became the most commonly used shell, but at this stage in the conflict we also used a great number of 'gas shells', generally in combination with other shells, such as two "HE" and one 'gas', and so on. Phosgene and chlorine are the gases which come to mind, but then later I think we sent over our share of mustard-gas shells.*[112]

At the same time as the artillery was reforming, the infantry was also experiencing its most significant change since the changeover from eight to four

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[110] BGGS, I ANZAC G182/168, 11 July 1917, AWM27, item 303/47.

[111] The 106 fuse was a 'graze' fuse, which meant that it detonated as soon as it struck an object rather than after it buried itself in the earth. It offered better chances of effectively cutting wire obstacles while causing fewer disturbances to the ground over which the infantry had to assault.

[112] Gnr H Monteith (1st FA Bde AIF), 'Observations of no 5886', not paginated, AWM: MSS0810.

companies. In early 1917 the BEF issued a new pamphlet 'SS143', *Instructions for the Training of Platoons for Offensive Action*.[113] This new doctrine based on lessons from the Somme fighting in 1916, called for a major restructure of the battalion and the reorganisation of the platoon, finally establishing it as the basis of infantry minor tactics. From March 1917 each of the 1st Division's infantry battalions was restructured to maintain four companies of four platoons and each platoon was now organised identically with: a section of bombers; a Lewis gun section; a section of riflemen; and a section of rifle-grenadiers. It was this organisation it would employ so effectively on the defensive at Lagnicourt in April and Bullecourt in May, and offensively at Menin Road in September and Broodseinde in October, during Third Ypres.[114]

In early 1917 the development of the medium machine-gun as a separate arm also took another step. In late 1916 the decision was made to form an additional medium machine-gun company within the BEF's divisions, with this company becoming a divisional asset. In March 1917 all divisions were directed to form this company and in the 1st Division's company was titled the 21st Machine-Gun Company (AIF). This too was just another small piece in the complex jigsaw that was the BEF's evolving war-fighting system.[115]

Once again changes in the fighting arms were reflected in equally momentous changes for the division's service support elements. The first of these changes came early in the year with the reorganisation of the artillery. Under the new organisation the Divisional Ammunition Column (DAC) was reconstituted with

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[113] This publication was published in February and issued in March, with further copies following in April, and minor amendments being promulgated in April and June. BGGS, I ANZAC Memorandum 130/119 'Instructions for the training of platoons for offensive action' 23 March 1917; BGGS, I ANZAC Memorandum G136/238 'Instructions for the training of platoons for offensive action', 21 April 1917; and MGGS, Third Army Memorandum G58/154, 23 June 1917. All held on AWM27, item 303/140.

[114] GS War Office, *Instruction for the Training of Platoons for Offensive Action* (SS143), Army Printing and Stationary Services, February 1917; and GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 8 March 1915, AWM4, 1/42/26. For the details of the HQ of the battalion, company and platoons see Lt Col TA Blamey (GSO1), 1st Aust Div GS Memorandum 'Reorganisation of an Infantry Battalion', 13 March 1917, AWM27, items 303/147, 303/153 and 303/171; and BGGS, I ANZAC Memorandum G136/235 'Infantry Organisation', 25 March 1917, AWM27, item 303/140.

[115] Lt Col T Griffiths (AAG AIF), HQ I ANZAC Memorandum 25/33 to Admin HQ AIF, 16 October 1916, AWM27, item 303/245; and Lt Col Whitham (AAG AIF), HQ I ANZAC Memorandum to 1st and 2nd Aust divs, 28 March 1917, AWM27, item 303/228.

an 'A' Echelon of just two sections and its third section becoming the 'B' Echelon.[116] The surplus transport resulting from this streamlining was used to provide transport for the new army field artillery brigades and to make good the deficiencies in the division's Establishment.[117] This reorganisation was accomplished in January at the same time as the field brigades were completing their reorganisation.[118] Although the new DAC Establishment was a significant reduction on its old organisation, even this reduction was not enough to forestall changes brought about by an acute shortage of horseflesh.[119]

By mid-1917 the shortage of suitable heavy draught horses for the artillery led to concern that any attempt by the BEF to return to mobile operations would see a considerable proportion of the field and horse-drawn heavy artillery become immobile. As a result a program was instituted to progressively replace more of the army's horse-drawn transport with motor vehicles. In the infantry divisions this would lead to the horse-drawn wagons in the DAC being replaced by the requisite number of lorries. So while the division's guns would continue to be hauled by horses, this was the beginning of a new era for logistics, heralding the end for the warhorse in the Australian and British armies.[120]

Following Third Ypres, in late 1917 motorisation of the division's logistics took another step with the last major wartime reorganisation of the DAC. In November the DAC was reorganised into a HQ, two gun sections and a single

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[116] Each of the two DAC sections had a WE of 218 all ranks, 41 horse-drawn wagons and 272 horses. The 'B' Echelon had a WE of 230 all ranks, 41 carts and horse-drawn wagons, and 289 horses. BMRA, 1st Aust Div Arty Order No 75, 21 January 1917, AWM27, item 303/40.

[117] AQMG, I ANZAC Administrative Staff Circular No 50 (Issued Under I ANZAC GS Circular No 44) 'Reorganisation of Divisional Artillery—Train Transport', 23 January 1917, AWM27, item 303/35, part 2.

[118] BGGS, HQ I ANZAC Order No 91, 22 January 1917, AWM27, item 303/35 part 2.

[119] The new DAC WE allowed for a combined strength of 696 personnel, 1044 horses and 86 wagons plus another five drivers, ten horses and five wagons from the Divisional Train. Following the reorganisation the division's two field brigades and the DAC were still deficient 423 draught horses, 181 riding horses and 139 personnel. BGGS, HQ I ANZAC GS Circular No 44 'Artillery Re-organisation', 18 January 1917, Appendix 1, AWM27, item 303/35 part 2; and BGGS (I ANZAC), '(I) & (II) Strengths and Deficiencies in Personnel and Horses of each of the reconstructed Divisional FA Bdes and DAC', 6 February 1917, AWM27, item 303/52.

[120] MGGS, Fifth Army Memorandum SG445/1 'Mechanical Draught for 18-pdr and 4.5" How. And 60-pdr. Batteries', 8 April 1917, AWM27, item 303/41; and SCRA, RA I ANZAC M146, 1 May 1917, AWM27, item 303/41.

small arms ammunition section. This restructure saw the two gun sections carrying only gun ammunition for the two field brigades—amounting to nearly 5000 rounds. This left the small arms section able to lift a slightly reduced allocation for the division, although this reserve still amounted to over a million rounds of rifle and machine-gun ammunition.[121]

1918—CONSOLIDATION

The heavy losses of Third Ypres precipitated a manpower crisis throughout the British Army in early 1918. This crisis was mirrored by similar problems in the AIF as the two failed conscription plebiscites left the Australian infantry divisions reliant on a dwindling pool of volunteers and returning wounded veterans for reinforcement. This crisis led to a major fracture in the organisational integrity of the BEF when, on 10 January 1918, the War Office directed GHQ to reduce the number of infantry battalions in each of its divisions from 12 to nine. This meant that all British infantry brigades lost a battalion and became continental model triangular brigades. Although the poor timing of the decision led to a substantial upheaval in some divisions and it was undoubtedly a factor in the German breakthrough in March, the decision was not without merit.[122]

While 1917 had seen the last major reorganisation of the artillery, in 1918 it was the turn of the trench mortars. Reorganisation of the various divisional and corps trench mortar organisations was undertaken in January to realign them with the appropriate artillery organisation, allowing a rationalisation of Establishments and an overall reduction in the number of batteries. The division lost its single heavy battery, which became a corps asset and the number of divisional medium batteries was reduced from three to two. Compensating for

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[121] The two gun sections of the DAC carried 100 rounds for each 18-pounder (3600 total) and 114 rounds for each 4.5-inch howitzer (1368 total). The small arms section carried 2000 rounds for each of the division's 64 medium machine-guns (128,000 total); 920 rounds for each of the 200 Lewis guns (184,000 total); 70 rounds for each battalion rifle (672,000 total) and 30 rounds for each pioneer rifle (30,000 total); giving a combined total of 1,014,000 rounds. SCRA, HQ 1st Aust Div Arty Order No 113, 24 November 1917, AWM27, item 303/40.

[122] For the positive and negative effects this reorganisation had on the BEF see: Bob Butcher, 'The Nine Battalion Controversy', *Stand To!*, No 68 (September 2003) pp 47–49; Terry Cave, 'Some Further Notes on Army Organisation', *Stand To!*, No 42 (January 1995) pp 18–19; and John Hussey, 'The British Divisional Reorganisation in February 1918', *Stand To!*, No 45 (January 1996) pp 12–14.

this change was the standardisation of the mortars so that each mortar battery now had six tubes and these were of a newer more lethal type.[123]

The final year of the war also saw the divisional signals reached their wartime peak and it was a much larger and considerably more 'modern' organisation than its 1914 forebear. Over the winter of 1917–18 several conferences were held at GHQ to discuss the organisation and administration of the signals. As a result of these deliberations, the company was set in May to include a HQ and Number 1 Section; a divisional artillery HQ detachment with two signal sub-sections for the artillery brigades; a wireless section; and Numbers 2, 3, 4 and 5 sections to provide communications for the infantry brigades and other divisional units. The growth in the means of communications available and technical complexity of these systems saw the company grow from its modest beginning in 1914 with just six officers and 157 soldiers to a wartime high of 15 officers and 400 soldiers.[124]

The competing trends of centralisation and decentralisation within the infantry battalion that began back in 1915 also continued into 1918. The manpower crisis in the BEF that forced it to abandon the 12-battalion division was partially offset by a doubling of the number of Lewis guns so that by the time of the German offensive in March, each BEF battalion had been allocated at least two Lewis guns per platoon—a divisional increase from 200 to 336. This increase came none too soon as the German offensives led to high AIF casualties and from June the Australian Corps was, like the rest of the BEF, adopting a new platoon organisation which acknowledged the manpower constraints and fixed the platoon organisation with two rifle sections and a single Lewis gun section

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[123] The new divisional medium batteries were initially designated 'Y' and 'Z' with their divisional indicators (Y/1/A and Z/1/A Batteries) but this was soon changed to a numerical system so that they became 1st and 2nd Australian medium trench mortar batteries. The older two-inch mortars were also replaced with six-inch Newton mortars. CGS, GHQ BEF Memorandum OB/186, 20 January 1918, AWM27, item 303/56; SORA, Artillery Instructions No 207 by GOCRA Aust Corps, 31 January 1918, AWM27, item 303/56; BGGS, HQ Aust Corps 68/15 'Corrigendum to General Staff Circular No 5 dated 25.1.18', 27 January 1918, AWM27, item 303/69; BGGS, HQ Aust Corps GS Circular No 5 'Medium Trench Mortar Batteries Organisation and Establishment', 25 January 1918, AWM27, item 303/56; and GOC, HQ 1st Aust Div Memorandum 68/145, 8 March 1918, AWM27, item 303/69.

[124] BGGS, HQ Aust Corps Memorandum 175/443, 10 May 1918, AWM27, item 303/130; GS, *WE of 1st Australian Division*, 1915, p 61; and Ronald Clifton, 'What is a Signal Company', *Stand To!*, No 36 (Winter 1992) pp 6–8.

with two guns. This was the organisation with which the 1st Division fought its final actions on the Western Front.[125]

Despite the steady draining of manpower this was the same period in which it could be argued that the 1st Division reached its peak combat performance. Between its outstanding defensive performance at Hazebrouck from April to July to its almost continuous offensive operations of the 100 days' campaign throughout August and September, the 1st Division emerged as one of the most effective fighting formations of the BEF. Thus care has to be taken in accepting that a relative decline in manpower automatically meant a decline in capability. Monash believed that a 1918 battalion could continue to operate effectively with its strength down to 600, and indeed some battalions in the last months of the war had only 400 all ranks. In fact, by late 1918 most Australian battalions had adapted to the manpower shortage by sacrificing one platoon per company and by reducing the number of companies from four to three. These changes were seen as a temporary if necessary expedient but they demonstrate that the 'square' paradigm that had been accepted for the battalion and brigade since 1914 was not sacrosanct.[126]

In September the final wartime organisation for the battalion was promulgated. Although this arrived too late to be implemented within the AIF, it represented the culmination of the development of the infantry battalion within the BEF during the Great War. This organisation standardised the battalion with four companies, each of four platoons with each platoon comprising four sections, two of which would be rifle sections and the other two Lewis gun sections.[127] Of particular interest is the fact that the maximum strength of a section to be taken into battle was fixed at one NCO and six soldiers and the minimum strength set

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[125] Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, p 288; War Office, *Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire During the Great War 1914–1920*, pp 258 and 267; Brig Gen CBB White (BGGS), HQ Aust Corps G136/310 GS Circular No 14 'Establishments—Infantry Battalion', 13 March 1918, AWM27, item 303/184; and Lt Col AM Ross (GS), HQ Aust Corps G136/334 to 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Aust divs, 24 June 1918, AWM27, item 303/169.

[126] Monash, *Australian Victories in France in 1918*, p 272; Wren, *Randwick to Hargicourt*, p 323; Lt Chapman (Adjutant 9th Bn AIF), Memorandum 'Organization', 29 August 1918, AWM27, item 303/181; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, p 896.

[127] GS, *Organization of the Infantry Battalion* (OB/1919), September 1918, AWM27, item 303/155.

at just three men. The BEF had come so far that it now saw that that 'as long as the section does not fall below three men with rifles or with a Lewis gun, it has sufficient power to act independently as a fire unit and should not be attached to another section.'[128] This would have been regarded as heresy in 1914.

The other factor counter-balancing the loss of 'bayonets' in 1918 was the further centralisation of divisional firepower. This trend took another turn in early 1918 with the creation of the divisional machine-gun battalion. Debate over the establishment of brigade and divisional machine-gun companies had been ongoing since the formation of the Machine-gun Corps. In late 1917 this debate intensified and GHQ acknowledged there was a 'great diversity of opinion'.[129] A discussion paper was circulated requesting opinions on the establishment of a machine-gun battalion in each division. This suggestion was prompted by two factors: first, the career aspirations of Machine-gun Corps officers who were seeking to consolidate their control over the development the corps; and second, and linked to the first was the growing sophistication of machine-gun tactics, which in turn was reflected in the maturation of its doctrine.[130]

This consolidation of power could only come at the expense of the infantry brigades. A counter proposal was that the brigade companies could be reduced from 16 to eight guns, allowing a greater concentration of guns under command of the Divisional Machine-gun Officer. Support for this innovation was not unanimous and not surprisingly it was the infantry brigade commanders who thought this a reasonable compromise as they had the most to lose. Opinion was divided and some Australian divisions put forward proposals supporting the scheme, while others offered variations. Despite the concerns the proposal

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[128] Ibid, p 3.

[129] Maj Gen R Butler (for CGS), Advanced GHQ, copy of GHQ Memorandum OB/407 to First, Second, Third, Fourth and Fifth armies, 21 October 1917, AWM27, item 303/228.

[130] GS WO, *Notes and Rules for Barrage Fire with Machine Guns* (40WO 4032), HMSO, London, May 1917; GS GHQ BEF, *The Employment of Machine Guns Part I Tactical* (SS192 OB/1432/A), GHQ BEF, January 1918; and GS GHQ BEF, *The Employment of Machine Guns Part II Organization and Direction of Fire* (SS192 OB/1432/A), GHQ BEF, January 1918.

went ahead and in March, just before the German spring offensive, the 1st Machine-Gun Battalion (AIF) was formed.[131]

As well as the manpower crisis in 1918, the BEF also experienced a deepening horseflesh crisis. It has already been noted that in mid-1917 the BEF began a program to replace horse-drawn wagons in the DAC with mechanised transport. In mid-1918 the home authorities advised GHQ that the shortage of horses would require the BEF to further reduce its demand. The solution arrived at was to reduce the Establishments of various artillery units by cutting the number of horses in each wagon team while leaving the gun teams unchanged. From June 1918, when this change was implemented, all first-line wagons in the 18-pounder batteries and the remaining ammunition wagon teams in the DACs were reduced from six to four horses. This reduction was partially offset by an increase in the number of spare horses although it still meant a net loss of 96 horses in each division.[132]

The horseflesh crisis also prompted a final reorganisation of the veterinary services. In May 1918 the number of veterinary officers with the division was reduced by three, with the only remaining veterinarians belonging to the two artillery brigades and the divisional train. The permanent assignment of these officers caused some concern within the division with Major George Heslop (DADVS), expressing his concern that these arrangements would lead to unnecessary friction. In particular, he felt it reduced his flexibility when veterinarians were called upon to support other divisional units that also maintained horses but who did not have a dedicated vet. The organisation of the 1st Division in its final campaigns is shown below.[133]

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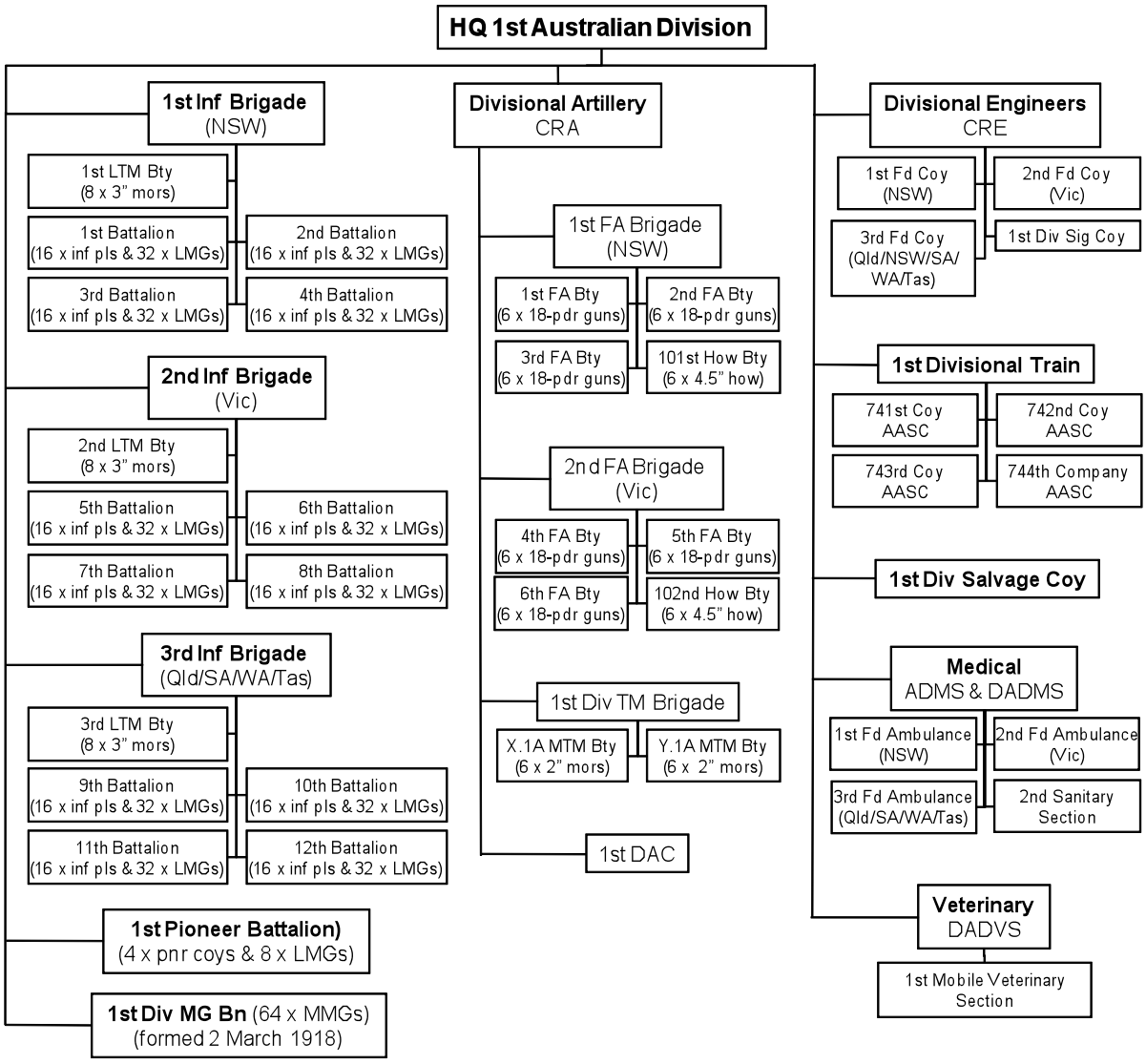
[131] GOC 1st Inf Bde (AIF), Memorandum 'Organisation and Establishment of Machine Gun Companies' to 1st Aust Div, 3 November 1917, AWM27, item 303/228; GOC, HQ 2nd Aust Div Memorandum to I ANZAC, 5 November 1917, AWM27, item 303/228; Brig Gen CBB White (BGGS), HQ Aust Corps G94/1/269 GS Circular No 12 'Organization–Machine Gun Units', 11 March 1918, AWM27, item 303/184; and Maj Gen HB Walker (GOC), HQ 1st Aust Div Memorandum 128/83 to HQ Aust Corps, 20 March 1918, AWM27, item 303/238.

[132] SCRA, HQRA I ANZAC Memorandum M146, 1 May 1917, AWM27, item 303/41; CGS GHQ, BEF OB/1866/E, 10 June 1918, AWM27, item 303/38; and DAQMG, Fourth Army Memorandum Q2369, 13 June 1918, AWM27, item 303/38.

[133] Maj G Heslop (DADVS), copy of HQ 1st Aust Div Memorandum, 6 May 1918, AWM27, item 303/304.

1st AUSTRALIAN DIVISION—1918[134]



The radical changes that had swept though the division's fighting arms and support services led to growing demand for new specialists. Just as the signals organisation had grown increasingly complex and sophisticated, so too had its logistics. The declining number of horses within the division was mirrored by a growth in the number of motor vehicles within the communications, artillery, medical and re-supply systems. These vehicles required trained drivers to operate them, mechanics to maintain them and trained supervisors who understood the nuances of managing them. This further increased the burden

[134] Based on: Perry, *OOB: Part 5A*, pp 12–13.

on the training organisations to produce a new breed of specialist that was gradually usurping the farrier, blacksmith, shoeing sergeant and veterinarian.

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The 1st Division was raised in 1914 as an infantry division of the British Army, albeit one with some local modifications. From its arrival in Egypt however, the division faced the first of many changes, which only brought it into closer alignment with its British counterpart. The 1st Division would remain a British division until the very end and the organisational changes that transformed it were merely a reflection of the radical changes that swept through the British Army.

As one leading historian noted of the final campaigns of 1918:

> *What was particularly noteworthy in the operation of these last 100 days was the co-ordination between the various elements. Infantry, artillery, machine-guns, tanks, aircraft, and wireless telegraphy all functioned as parts of a single unit. As a result of meticulous planning, each component was integrated with, and provided maximum support for, every other component. Here, more than anywhere else, was the great technical achievement of these climatic battles. It was not that the British had developed a war-winning weapon. What they had produced was a 'weapons system': the melding of the various elements in the military arm into a mutually supporting whole.*[135]

The development of this ‘weapons system’ is reflected in the changing organisational ‘fit’ of the 1st Division. This process of improvisation and adaptation within the division was characterised by the competing trends of centralisation and decentralisation, of concentration and diffusion, and the demands of the specialist versus the generalist. By the end of the war the 1st Division was a radically different the organisation to that which was raised in

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[135] Trevor Wilson, *The Myriad Faces of War*, Polity, Cambridge, 1988, p 586.

1914. Indeed, in 1918 it looked remarkably similar to the organisations that would later fight World War II.

In September 1939 a new world war threatened and to meet its obligations to the Empire Australia raised a 2nd Australian Imperial Force. The premier division of this new force was the 6th Australian Division. In this division the 18-pounders and 4.5-inch howitzers would soon be replaced by the 25-pounder, the Lewis guns exchanged for the Bren gun, the horses were all gone and the triangular system within the infantry brigade would become permanent rather than an expedient. These changes however, were largely superficial and when it came time for the 6th Division to fight it would do so in a remarkably similar way to its predecessor. The technology may have evolved but the 6th Division embodied the same anatomy as the veteran 1st Division, such was the revolution that had swept through it between 1914 and 1918.[136]

[136] Gavin Long, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945. Series 1 (Army): To Benghazi*, Vol I, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1961, pp 51–52 and 204 (hereafter referred to as *To Benghazi*); and Craig Stockings, *Bardia: Myth, Reality and the Heirs of Anzac*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2009, p 29.

CHAPTER 3

SINEWS OF WAR: DIVISIONAL ADMINISTRATION

> *Wars may be won or lost by the standard of health and moral*[e] *of the opposing forces. Moral*[e] *depends to a very large extent upon the feeding and general well being of the troops. Badly supplied troops will invariably be low in moral*[e] *and an Army ravaged by disease ceases as a fighting force. The feeding and health of the fighting forces are dependent upon the rearward services, and so… with the rearward services rests victory or defeat.*
>
> Sir Douglas Haig[1]

Military administration covers the management and execution of all matters not covered in tactics and strategy; it is 'that portion of the functions of command which deals with the maintenance of forces in the field.'[2] As Douglas Haig observed, without sound administration an army is unlikely to be in a position to even train much less fight. How the 1st Division's administrative system, its 'rearward service', worked and how it changed during the war is the subject of this chapter.

In accordance with British doctrine administration was divided between the Adjutant General ('A') and the Quartermaster General ('Q'). The 'A' staff dealt with personnel matters, while the 'Q' staff dealt with logistics.[3] Both of these responsibilities are rarely mentioned in Australian military histories and aside from a few specialist British studies produced immediately after the war, there has been little attention given to the subject by recent historians. It was not until

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[1] Boraston (ed), *Sir Douglas Haig's Despatches*, p 340.

[2] Maj Gen JM Durrant, 'Army Administration for War' lecture presented in November 1933, AWM: Durrant papers, PR88/099, folder 6. The Australian Army still uses essentially the same definition, defining administration as: 'The management and execution of all military matters not included in tactics and strategy; primarily in the fields of logistics and personnel administration.' Australian Defence Force, *Australian Defence Force Publication 101—Glossary*, Headquarters Australian Defence Force, Canberra, 1994, p A-3.

[3] Logistics is defined as: 'The science of planning and carrying out the movement and maintenance of forces.' Ibid, p L-7.

1998 that a study of the BEF's logistics was published and the subject of administration has yet to receive similar attention, although some studies have addressed higher administration and organisation from a dominion perspective.[4]

Despite the dearth of research it was the prosaic detail of administration that sustained the 1st Division during its four years of service, underpinning its success on the battlefield. Most obviously, soldiers had to be armed, clothed, fed and delivered to the battlefield but their needs extended well beyond the basics and no soldier could stay in the front-line indefinitely. To keep functioning over years of hard front-line service soldiers had to have access to rest and leave, exercise and sport, pastoral care and entertainment. To enjoy these they had to be paid and given access to recreational facilities. If they performed well the authorities had a vested interest in publicly rewarding them, to encourage similar behaviour in others. Conversely those who transgressed had to be punished. Soldiers also fell ill or were wounded, requiring hospitalisation, and convalescence. When recovered they had to be returned to their unit. If they were killed, the bodies had to be buried and personal effects disposed of. When soldiers were killed they had to be replaced—this is the business of administration.

Although any account of administration is mundane in comparison with battle history it is none the less a vital part of how armies function and how they spend their time. The 1st Division spent 423 days—roughly a quarter of its service—engaged in administration. Half of this time (205 days) was spent on administrative moves, sometimes by sea (66 days), rail (43 days), motor vehicle (12 days), but most often by marching (84 days). Most of the other half of its administration time was spent looking after personnel, be it rest and recreation (153 days), camp duties (20 days), ceremonial activities (nine days), inspections (four days), and miscellaneous medical and mortuary activities (two days). The remaining 30 days were devoted to logistics, primarily preparing

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[4] For the BEF's logistics see: Ian Malcolm Brown, *British Logistics on the Western Front*, Praeger, Westport, 1998. For the AIF's higher administration see: Bruce Faraday, 'Half the Battle: The Administration and Higher Organisation of the AIF 1914–1918', PhD thesis, University College ADFA, Canberra, 1997.

quarters and billets (17 days) and ordnance activities related to drawing and returning equipment (12 days).[5]

At unit level administration was an even more time consuming task. A typical battalion spent nearly a third of its service (496 days) looking to its 'interior economy'.[6] Nearly three-fifths of this time (281 days) was devoted to personnel matters while two-fifths was devoted to administrative moves (193 days) and logistics (22 days).[7] Of course units such as the 1st Divisional Train or the 1st Divisional Ammunition Column spent the majority of their time, day-in and day-out, on nothing but logistics since that was literally their 'bread and butter' or 'bullets and beans'. This activity never ceased, whether in the line or out, whether training or fighting.

PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

From the outset the Australian authorities established the AIF as a separate force albeit one designed to operate in conjunction with the British Army. This required two chains of command—one operational and the other administrative. Operationally the 1st Division was regarded as just another British formation, while administratively the AIF was a separate national force with its own promotion system, pay scales, and other administrative machinery. Administrative power was vested in the appointment of General Officer Commanding (GOC) AIF and in September 1914 Throsby Bridges was appointed to the dual appointments of GOC 1st Division and GOC AIF. When Bridges was killed William Birdwood took over responsibility as GOC AIF as

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[5] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, August 1914–March 1919, AWM4, items 1/42/1–1/42/49.

[6] In the British Army unit administration was referred to as internal or interior economy. Charles E Vivian, *The British Army from Within*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1914, pp 136–157; *Notes for Commanding Officers: Issued to Students at the Senior Officers' School, Aldershot, 1917. (5th Course)*, Gale and Polder, Aldershot, 1917, Parts III and IV, pp 307–359 [hereafter referred to as *Notes for Commanding Officers (5th Course)*, 1917]; and 'Lecture on Interior Economy', nd (probably August 1917), AWM27, item 305/2.

[7] Based on an analysis of the 1st Battalion (AIF) daily activities and a selective comparison with the activities of the 5th and 9th battalions. 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, AWM4, items 23/18/1–23/18/42; 5th Bn (AIF), War Diary, AWM4, items 23/22/1–23/22/50; and 9th Bn (AIF), War Diary, AWM4, items 23/26/1–23/26/52.

well as being the operational commander of the ANZAC.[8] Birdwood kept this appointment for most of the war, although Alexander Godley (GOC NZEF) exercised it for a period after Gallipoli.

While the internal administration of the 1st Division was the responsibility of the divisional commander, his key deputy and the man who shouldered the day-to-day responsibility for the division's administration was the Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General (AAQMG). Before examining the system he supervised it will be useful to briefly examine the men who held this crucial appointment. The division's first AAQMG was Colonel Victor 'Porky' Sellheim, who on the eve of the war was the army's Adjutant General. Sellheim proved to be 'an able and experienced staff officer, highly articulate and a good administrator' during the hectic period of mobilisation but if he had a weakness it was 'his presence: he was corpulent and had a stammer, and he quarrelled with his commander'.[9] When the division arrived in Egypt Bridges moved quickly to banish Sellheim to establish the Australian Intermediate Base.[10]

Sellheim's replacement was the equally luckless William 'Bung' Patterson. In 1914 Patterson was appointed Deputy AAQMG under Sellheim but he appears to have had a less than robust constitution and under the pressure of the Gallipoli landings he had a nervous breakdown and was invalided home.[11] Patterson's temporary replacement was Major (later Major General) John 'Gelly' Gellibrand, an Australian-born ex-British regular and Camberley graduate, who started the war as Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General. Although Bridges

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[8] Bridges' powers were wide-ranging and far wider than any subsequent Australian contingent commander. *AIFO*: No 21, dated 19 September 1914.

[9] AJ Hill, 'Sellheim, Victor Conradsdorf Morisset (1866–1928)', *ADB*, Vol 11, p 566; and 'AIF Leaders: Their Nicknames', *Reveille*, Vol 6, No 1 (1 September 1932) p 12.

[10] Base depots were part of the British Army's administrative system. They were established when an expeditionary force was deployed overseas and there was a need for an intermediate base between the homeland and the theatre of operations. A base depot was to be created near or within the theatre of operations and ideally centred on a port to allow for reinforcements and supplies to be shipped into theatre and then distributed to the forces at the front. Andrew Rawson, *British Army Handbook 1914–1918*, Sutton Publishing, Thrupp, 2006, pp 150–151.

[11] 'AIF Leaders: Their Nicknames', *Reveille*, Vol 6, No 1 (1 September 1932) p 12; AIF, *Staff Regimental and Graduation List of Officers*, 6 December 1914, pp 6 and 59; 1st Aust Div, Div Orders Part II No 7, 21 January 1915, AWM: Gellibrand papers, 3DRL 1473, item 94; AWM182, item 2B; and Admin Staff HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 27 April 1915, AWM4, item 1/43/5.

was now running out of A&Q staff this did not help Gellibrand who was soon in Bridges' sights and his career was only saved by the Turkish bullet that mortally wounded his chief.[12] Gellibrand was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel (later Brigadier General) John Forsyth who served in the position only two months before he was promoted to take command of the 2nd Infantry Brigade (AIF).[13]

Fortunately for the 1st Division the A&Q staff 'churn' was halted following Bridges' death with the appointment of Lieutenant Colonel Cecil Foott. Foott served the division as AAQMG for two years, from July 1915 through until August 1917. As an Australian regular and pre-war Staff College graduate, Foott attended Camberley at the same time that Thomas Blamey was at Quetta and at the end of his two-year course he was rated:

> *Ability fair but slow. Keen and earnest. An indefatigable worker, and, considering his want of experience of troops and lack of military education when he came to Staff College, he has made most creditable progress. He is observant and has common-sense and determination, and he can be relied upon to spare no pains in any work he may have to do, and to take sound and temperate views. He is more a staff officer than a leader…. He is popular and pleasant to deal with.*[14]

Foott, when later teamed with Blamey as the GSO1, would prove an excellent choice as the division's chief administrator.[15]

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[12] 'AIF Leaders: Their Nicknames', *Reveille*, Vol 6, No 1 (1 September 1932) p 12; Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 80; AW Bazley, 'Gellibrand, John (1872–1945)', *ADB*, Vol 8, pp 636–638; and PS Sadler, *The Paladin: A Life of Major-General Sir John Gellibrand*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2000.

[13] AWM183, item 1A; JG Williams, 'Forsyth, John Keathy (1867–1928)', *ADB*, Vol 8, pp 555–556; AWM: 183/20; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, p 869.

[14] Brig Gen LE Kiggell (Commandant Staff College), copy of 'Staff College Report 1913', 12 December 1913, AWM182, item 1A.

[15] Foott joined the 1st Division in Egypt in January 1915 as the DAQMG. On Gallipoli he served as AAQMG, an appointment he kept until 1917 when he left on promotion to be DAQMG AIF Depots. He returned to France in March 1918 to be appointed Brigadier General Royal Engineers for the Australian Corps. 'AQ', 'Celebrities of the AIF (12): Brigadier-General Cecil Foott', *Reveille*, Vol 4, No 11 (31 July 1931) pp 7 and 28; NAA: B2455, file FOOTT CH; and Warren Perry, 'Foott, Cecil Henry (1876–1942)', *ADB*, Vol 8, p 537.

Foott's successor was another talented regular—Lieutenant Colonel Horace Viney. A strong-minded and intelligent officer, one of his subordinates recalled:

> *Viney, a disciplinarian, admired rather than loved, was a man remarkable in his administrative abilities, whose voice and crushing utterances were feared by officers and men alike. A most efficient and able soldier, before the War ended he advanced a long way in rank and in the esteem of his contemporaries and friends.*[16]

Viney gained significant regimental and staff experience in the three years before his appointment as AAQMG, an appointment he retained until after the Armistice.[17] Only in November 1918 did Lieutenant Colonel John 'Bull' Hardie replace Viney and it was he who oversaw the dismantling of the 1st Division.[18]

From this brief description of the division's head administrators a number of features stand out. First and perhaps the most obvious, it did not pay to be an administrator serving under William Throsby Bridges. For all of his abilities as an organiser, Bridges was a commander who did not appreciate the difficulties his A&Q staff faced. Second, all of the AAQMGs for the 1st Division shared similar backgrounds. They were all pre-war regulars and unlike some of the other divisional appointments that eventually went to pre-war Citizen Forces officers or civilians, the position of chief administrator was never one of them. It is also worth noting that two of the best AAQMGs—John Gellibrand and Cecil Foott—were also graduates of the British Army's staff college at Camberley, while a third—Horace Viney—was a product of the BEF's wartime staff course.

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[16] Humphrey Kempe, *Participation*, The Hawthorn Press, Melbourne, 1973, p 21.

[17] Horace Viney was an Australian-born regular who joined the 3rd LH Regiment (AIF) as adjutant in 1914. He served on Gallipoli but shortly before the withdrawal he was appointed DAAQMG 2nd Division and back in Egypt he was appointed Brigade Major 5th Infantry Brigade. In France he was awarded the DSO before joining the 1st Division as DAAQMG in October 1916. Two months later he attended the staff course at Hesdin and on his return he was appointed DAAG. Promoted lietenant colonel in July he became AAQMG. For his later services he was appointed a CMG and CBE. Michael Shepherd, 'Viney, Horace George (1885–1972)', ADB, Vol 12, p 330; NAA: B2455, file VINEY HORACE GEORGE; and AWM182, item 1A.

[18] R Sutton, 'Hardie, John Leslie (1882–1956)', *ADB*, Vol 9, pp 192–193.

THE DIVISIONAL MEDICAL SYSTEM

Of all the division's administrative activities, none was more important than those of the medical services. Medical activities ranged from the recruits' initial medical and dental checks to ensure that they were fit to undergo military service, to the unpopular but regular inoculations against communicable disease, and the daily unit medical parades where sick troops sought treatment from their unit Regimental Medical Officer (RMO). It also included the regular sanitary activities, such as rubbish incineration and baths, which the medical authorities instituted in their constant war against vermin and disease. So successful were these efforts that the British Army was able to reverse the long-standing historical trend where armies habitually lost more soldiers to disease than they did on the battlefield.[19] Indeed John Charteris, Field Marshal Haig's intelligence chief, felt that the 'medical arrangements were the most successful of all the BEF administrative efforts'.[20]

The subject of casualties and the Australian and British medical systems during the war has been examined thoroughly in a number of studies and it is not intended to deal with the wider medical system and its advances here.[21] What this section will endeavour to do is to examine the number and type of casualties suffered by the 1st Division and the medical system as it operated within the divisional area.

Casualty statistics for the Great War are a vexed issue as battlefield record keeping was sometimes inaccurate and different organisations used different

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[19] In the Boer War the British Army suffered 13 sick men for every one wounded and nearly two deaths to every one from wounds. In the Great War these statistics were revered with only 1.3 sick for every one wounded, one death from disease for every ten from wounds, and mortality rates were around eight percent for the wounded and one percent for the sick. Geoffrey Noon, 'The Treatment of Casualties in the Great War', in Griffith (ed), *British Fighting Methods in the Great War*, p 87.

[20] John Charteris, *At GHQ*, Cassell, London, 1931, p 42.

[21] Britain produced a 12 volume medical services history, while Australia contributed its own a three volume medical history of the AIF. More recent treatments of the AAMC include: Michael Tyquin, *Madness and the Military: Australia's experience of the Great War*, Australian Military History Publications, Loftus, 2006; Michael Tyquin, *Little by Chance: A Centenary History of the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps*, Army History Unit, Canberra, 2003; and Michael Tyquin, *Gallipoli: The Medical War: The Australian Army Medical Services in the Dardanelles Campaign of 1915*, New South Wales University Press, Kensington, 1993.

methods and terminology in classifying casualties. All wartime statistics, including those offered here, must be treated with some caution. In general however, record keeping improved as the war progressed and by the middle years a standard classification system was being employed. The key discriminator in this system was whether the casualty occurred as a result of enemy action or not. Hence all casualties that occurred in close proximity to the front-line were classified as a 'battle casualties'. Those that occurred away from the line and were not attributable to the enemy were classified as 'non-battle casualties'.[22]

The other discriminator employed by the medical services in categorising casualties was whether the casualty was a permanent or temporary loss. Soldiers lost permanently include those who were killed, listed as missing, captured, or discharged from the army as an invalid. Across the British Army approximately 26 percent of all casualties were permanent losses.[23]

The 1st Division suffered a total of about 50,000 battle casualties during the war, of which 15,000 were fatalities. Those who were deemed to have been killed by enemy action but were not admitted to a medical establishment before dying, were classified as killed in action (KIA) and these accounted for 10,440 of the division's fatalities. If a casualty was evacuated and survived to be admitted to a medical unit before dying, they were classified as died of wounds (DOW) and these accounted for a further 3579. The only other deaths were a small group who died of gas poisoning (DGP), accounting for 57 all ranks. The other two categories of fatality were not attributable to enemy action. The first of these were those who were classified as died of other causes (DOC), which

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[22] 'Battle' casualties in the British forces during the Great War 'includes killed, missing, prisoners of war, and those who suffered injury caused by or arising from enemy action, including injuries by rifle, gunfire, bombs, bayonets and liquid fire, shock to the nervous system caused by bursting shells, although producing no visible traumata, and the effects of contact with, or inhalation of, poisonous gases.' 'Non-battle casualties' includes 'all cases of sickness or injury independent of any act of the enemy.' Mitchell and Smith, *BOHMS: Casualties and Medical Statistics*, pp xvi–xvii.

[23] Mitchell and Smith, *BOHMS: Casualties and Medical Statistics*, ibid.

accounted for 127 all ranks; and those who died of disease (DOD), another 845 all ranks.[24]

The other significant group that appeared regularly on the casualty returns were the 'missing'. Many soldiers were lost or disappeared during battle, either temporarily because they became separated from their unit, or permanently because they were killed and no identifiable remains were recovered, or they had been taken prisoner. The manner in which these casualties were classified was eventually settled upon by a Board of Enquiry that attempted to confirm the soldier's fate through eyewitness reports, the recovery of a body, or confirmation that the soldier was a prisoner.[25] In some cases, without any definitive evidence, the soldier remained as 'missing' until the end of the war when a final determination was made as to their probable fate.[26]

Non-fatal casualties were also classified in different ways. The three main classifications were wounded in action (WIA), gassed, and prisoners of war (PW). In total the 1st Division suffered 30,320 wounded, another 3312 gassed and just 500 taken prisoner.[27] So what do these raw statistics tell us about the division?

First, and not surprising as it was the longest serving Australian formation, the 1st Division suffered the highest number of casualties of any Australian division.

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[24] Of those killed 731 were officers and 14,317 were soldiers (total 15,048 all ranks). It should be noted however that in the AIF data fatal battle casualties includes KIA, DOW, DOD, DGP and DOC. These figures are taken from the official AIF casualty figures published in 1919 and are significantly fewer than the figures published in 1937. The 1937 divisional figures include an additional 85 fatalities and another 2352 wounded. AIF, *AIF: Statistics of Casualties*, p 15; and Spedding, *Official Year Book 1937 (Coronation Issue)*, p 113.

[25] Maj J Millner (DAAG), HQ 1st Aust Div Memorandum 'Missing in France', 2 June 1917, AWM25, item 229/2. For an example of the Court of Enquiry findings see: 10th Bn (AIF), 'Proceedings of Court of Enquiry' 16 May 1918, AWM8, item 229/2.

[26] In 1930 there were still 8000 British servicemen listed as 'missing'. Most of these men were initially registered as having been taken prisoner but as the prisoners were repatriated after the armistice and the official machinery for their return finally dismantled in 1928, most of these men must be presumed to have been killed or they survived but wished to remain anonymous. 'War's Toll: Missing', *The Reveille*, Vol 3, No 9 (31 May 1930) p 29.

[27] AIF statistics give a total of 1242 officers and 29,078 soldiers wounded; another 124 officers and 3188 soldiers gassed; and a total of 14 officers and 486 soldiers taken prisoner. AIF, *AIF: Statistics of Casualties*, p 15.

In fact its 15,000 fatalities represent a quarter of Australia's war dead. No other Australian formation has ever suffered such a heavy toll in any war since.[28]

Second, the majority of the division's battle casualties were suffered in only 11 engagements. These battles (in which the division suffered more than 1000 casualties) include: the landings at Anzac, the Second Battle of Krithia, and the attack at Lone Pine (all on Gallipoli); the fighting at Pozières and Mouquet Farm (First Battle of the Somme); Second Bullecourt; the Battle of Menin Road and the Battle of Broodseinde (Third Battle of Ypres); and the defence of Hazebrouck (Battle of Lys), the capture of Lihons, and the capture of Chuignes (Second Battle of the Somme). The duration of these actions was less than three months (just five percent of the division's time in existence) but they account for 85 percent of its casualties. So casualties were not suffered in a steady stream that could be anticipated with accuracy, rather they peaked during periods of major action, trailed off during quieter operational periods, and were reduced to a trickle during periods of rest and training.[29]

Third, unlike any previous war very few of the division's fatalities were attributable to disease. For example during the Boer War 294 Australians were killed in action or died of wounds or were reported missing, while 267 died from disease. So while 50 percent of the South African fatalities were due to disease, the 1st Division recorded just 0.05 percent of such fatalities.[30]

The medical organisation within the 1st Division was under the direction of the Assistant Director Medical Services and the division was served by a succession of efficient directors. These men included Colonel Charles Ryan (1914)[31], Colonel Neville Howse, VC (1914–16)[32], Colonel Alfred Sturdee

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[28] Australia's Great War dead amounted to 59,324. Butler, *AOHMS*, Vol III, p 880, Table 10.

[29] Butler, *AOHMS*, Vol II, graph 8, p 493.

[30] For Boer War casualties see: Craig Wilcox, Craig, *Australia's Boer War: The War in South Africa 1899–1902*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2002.

[31] Charles Ryan was an Australian-born surgeon who in a colourful pre-war career serving as a surgeon in the Turko-Servian War (1876) and the Russo-Turkish War (1877–78) where he was captured. After returning to Australia he continued to practice medicine and joined the militia, rising to become Principal Medical Officer in Victoria. In August 1914 he was retired but joined the AIF to be the ADMS 1st Division. In Egypt Ryan was superseded by Neville Howse. Ryan

(1916)[33], and Colonel Robert Huxtable (1916–18)[34]. It was these men who were responsible for provision of medical services within the division's area.[35]

To fully appreciate the improvements that occurred in the medical care of the division's soldiers during the war it is necessary to step back to how this began from a low and tragic start. The fiasco of the medical arrangements during the Gallipoli landings have been thoroughly explored elsewhere and in general they are held up as an example of military incompetence.[36] The reasons for the debacle on the beaches are however, more complex than wanton stupidity. A

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later served in London as consulting surgeon with the AIF HQ, only returning home in May 1919. For his war services he was appointed a KBE, CB and CMG. Frank MC Forster, 'Ryan, Sir Charles Snodgrass', *ADB*, Vol 11, pp 491–492.

[32] Neville Howse was an English-born, Boer War VC recipient and Principal Medical Officer AN&MEF before joining the AIF in 1914 as a Supernumerary Medical Officer. He sailed from Australia with HQ 1st Division and during the voyage he won the confidence of Bridges and the friendship of White and as a result he was appointed ADMS 1st Division in Egypt and promoted colonel. He served on Gallipoli where his efforts in sorting out the chaos that surrounded the evacuation of casualties led to him being appointed a CB. In September he was appointed DDMS ANZAC and in November he was appointed DMS AIF. Following the withdrawal Howse established his HQ in London, continuing to exercise control over the medical arrangements for the AIF. He was later promoted major general and appointed a KCMG, KCB and a Knight of the Order of St John of Jerusalem. NAA: B2455, file HOWSE NR MAJOR-GENERAL; AJ Hill, 'Howse, Sir Neville Reginald (1863–1930)', ADB, Vol 9, pp 384–386; and 'Neville Howse, VC: Tribute', The Reveille, Vol 4, No 1 (30 September 1930) p 26.

[33] Alfred Sturdee was a Boer War veteran and Citizen Forces officer when he was appointed CO 2nd Field Ambulance (AIF) in 1914. He served on Gallipoli where he appointed ADMS 1st Division and continued to serve as ADMS on the Western Front until late November 1916 when he was invalided home. For his war services he was appointed a CMG. His son, Vernon Sturdee, was a Permanent Forces officer who served with the 1st Division engineers and rose to general rank during World War II. Murray, *Official Records of the Australian Military Contingents to the War in South Africa*, pp 279 and 259; and Lt Col A Sturdee, diary, ADFA: MS183; NAA: B2455, file STURDEE ALFRED HOBART; 'Fathers and Sons: AIF List', *The Reveille*, Vol 4, No 1 (30 September 1930) p 20; and John Buckley, 'Father and Son on Gallipoli: Alfred Sturdee and Vernon Ashton Hobart Sturdee', *Defence Force Journal*, No 81 (March–April 1990) pp 30–51.

[34] Robert Huxtable was an Australian-born, Boer War veteran and Citizen Forces officer when he was appointed a lieutenant colonel in the AIF in May 1915 to be CO 7th Field Ambulance (AIF). He served in Egypt and on Gallipoli with the 2nd Division. He saw further service on the Western Front where he was appointed ADMS 1st Division and promoted colonel. He only left the division in late 1918 to take command Number 2 Australian General Hospital. For his war services he was appointed CMG and awarded the DSO. NAA: B2455, file HUXTABLE RB COLONEL; and AMF, *Supplement to the Officers' List*, p 136.

[35] This section is based on: Major General Sir WG Macpherson, *Official History of the Great War. Medical Services*, Vol II HMSO, London, 1923, pp 14–63; Mitchell and Smith, *BOHMS: Medical Casualties and Statistics*, pp 21–22; and Tyquin, *Gallipoli*, pp 2–3.

[36] Robert Rhodes James, *Gallipoli*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1965, pp 77–79, 87 and 90–93.

lack of time to plan, a poorly organised and ad hoc staff that was 'stove-piped' and a lack of experience in joint operations all doomed Hamilton's operation from the start.[37]

There was little in the experience of any of the British or Australian staffs that could have prepared them for the scale and nature of casualties suffered on Gallipoli. Most Australian and British medical officers had some experience in dealing with medical arrangements for small-scale colonial operations although this was obviously inadequate preparation for the challenges of industrialised war. Considerable study had been undertaken into developing a more robust medical evacuation system in the wake of the Boer War and recent conflicts such as the Russo-Japanese War had been studied for relevant lessons; but the lessons of these conflicts did not always turn out to be a good indicator of the problems that would beset the 'medicos' during the Great War.[38]

The 1st Division's field ambulance stretcher-bearers began landing on the shores of Gallipoli at about 10.00 am on 25 April and immediately began the task of collecting the wounded and carrying them from the firing line to the beach. At the collection points casualties were classified and depending on their priority they were allocated to one of the pinnaces or barges conveying the wounded to the waiting hospital ships and transports. At first the bearers ranged up and down every part of the line and it took some time for the confusion of the landings to subside before a more systematic approach was implemented. By

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[37] The medical staff was not responsible for articulating policy as this responsibility lay with the General Staff who had to weigh up the conflicting priorities and balance operational requirements. Only when the General Staff has determined the policy guidelines could the medical staff develop their plans. The medical staff could provide advice and options but ultimately the commander was responsible balancing his requirements for force preservation with the needs of the operational task. GS, *FSR*, Vol I, 1923, pp 42, 70, 266 and 233.

[38] It was not only the medical arrangements for the Gallipoli campaign that came in for criticism, in 1914 the British medical evacuation system in France broke down and there was an outcry against the medical service when the wounded arrived at base hospitals, exhausted and poisoned by foully infected wounds. All belligerents suffered problems with their medical systems under the strain of industrialised warfare including the French, and the Americans who had two-and-a-half years to study the allies' difficulties. Mitchell and Smith, *BOHMS: Medical Casualties and Statistics*, pp 31 and 35.

the second week each ambulance was given a sector to support and gradually disorganisation gave way to order.[39]

Once the chaos of the landings began to subside, Howse was able to reorganise the medical arrangements and the field ambulances established regular facilities ashore. Once these facilities, including dugouts for the casualties were built, the three bearer sections of the field ambulance would work on a 12-hour shift system, while the tent divisions worked a weekly rotation.[40] These arrangements generally served the division well for the remainder of the campaign, including the heavy fighting in August.

Even during the height of the fighting at Lone Pine, the divisional medical arrangements worked reasonably well and if a wounded 1st Division soldier could be evacuated, he had a good chance of surviving. According to the official Australian historian Arthur Butler (a one-time 1st Division doctor and field ambulance commander), once the casualties were taken to a field ambulance on Gallipoli only 6.8 percent died of their wounds and this mortality rate obviously decreased substantially for those who made it to Egypt. This figure is better than the comparative figure on the Western Front, which was 7.6 percent.[41]

What the 1st Division learned the hard way was that with any scare resource planning had to be thorough and assets had to be regrouped to meet anticipated tasks and needs. This meant that divisional assets were often detached to other formations to meet operational requirements. With only 150 hospital beds and 100 stretcher-bearers to meet a rush of perhaps several thousand casualties during major operations, the mathematics were obvious and ‘pooling’ became the solution.

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[39] *Four Years with the First*, p 5.

[40] Pte V Laidlaw (2nd Fd Ambulance AIF), diary entry, 19 June 1915, SLV: MS11827, Box 2163/5.

[41] Butler, *AOHMS*, Vol I, p 471; and Noon, ‘The Treatment of Casualties in the Great War’, pp 94–96.

As noted in the previous chapter when the 1st Division moved to the Western Front it often found its internal integrity sacrificed in order to streamline and improve casualty care. Although the division maintained its three field ambulances, for much of the time these units were detached to other organisations; or they could just as often find themselves reinforced by the attachment of other field ambulance detachments from other divisions. As with the changes to artillery command and control, these arrangements evolved out of the 1916 Somme fighting and were gradually implemented during the following winter. For example during Third Ypres 1st Division's bearer sub-divisions were used to supplement the bearers of units committed to the fighting. Under the very difficult conditions and with a large number of casualties, each division in the line was allocated 600 fresh bearers every 12 hours—the equivalent of six division's worth of stretcher-bearers.[42]

As a result of these brigaded medical arrangements, soldiers of the 1st Division found themselves passing through an assortment of medical hands from across the Empire. Private William Lorimer, a 5th Battalion soldier, was wounded during Third Ypres and he described how he:

> *Moved into the fray and got wounded. A funny thing was that when* [they] *got me down from the line, I went through such a lot of different dressing stations. They were something like this, Australian, Scotch, South African, Canadian, and ended up in a American Hospital…*[43]

Although the division's medical staff often found their assets scattered or supplemented from outside the division, this did not mean that the ADMS and his staff played only a peripheral role. Rather, the ADMS remained responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the arrangements within the division's area of responsibility and here he faced the constant dilemma of where to place his assets and just how far forward they should be positioned. From a purely

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[42] Butler, *AOHMS*, Vol II, pp 67, 69 and 82; and Mitchell and Smith, *BOHMS: Casualties and Medical Statistics*, p 24.

[43] Pte W Lorimer (5th Bn AIF), diary entry, 20 September 1917, SLV: MS10481, MSB221.

medical point of view it was obviously advisable to have the dressing stations as far forward as possible while remaining close to the transport infrastructure to allow for the rapid evacuation of serious casualties. On the other hand, this had to be balanced against the danger to the ambulance personnel and their charges. This became even more complicated with the return to open warfare.

In 1918, with a return to more mobile operations, different arrangements had to be developed for casualty evacuation on the move. During the final battles of the war the field ambulance bearers were occasionally attached directly to the infantry battalions as they advanced over the rolling Somme up-lands. In the case of the tent sub-divisions they were also called upon to reinforce field ambulances maintaining a main dressing station and they were employed to supplement stationary hospitals by providing additional capacity to meet the increased number of 'beds' required during offensives.[44]

This year also presented another problem for the ambulances and dressing stations in that they had to maintain a degree of mobility not experienced on a large scale since 1914. Given their limited transport capacity, they could not do this while holding the lightly wounded, sick or the more severely wounded awaiting evacuation. When an advance was required, the field ambulances could only move forward once they had disposed of their patients. Fortunately the operations of 1918 did not stretch the capacity of the division's medical staff to breaking point, as the modest advances and withdrawals were coupled with improvements in the medical evacuation system.

As well as providing additional soldiers to carry the wounded from the battlefield, considerable progress was made during the war in their subsequent evacuation. The 1st Division went to war in 1914 with a total of 30 horse-drawn ambulances but as the war progressed, and especially after the move to the Western Front, quicker moving forms of transport were gradually adopted. Motor-ambulances gradually replaced the horse-drawn ambulances and a

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[44] *Four Years with the First*, pp 15–16 and 20.

network of trolleys, tramways, light and broad-gauge railways were constructed both for re-supply and medical evacuation.[45]

If a wounded 1st Division soldier was evacuated quickly to a medical establishment he stood a good chance of survival. Although the data is incomplete, British analysis indicates that approximately 82 percent of wounded soldiers and 93 percent of the sick or injured were ultimately returned to some form of duty. Of those discharged from hospital, 78 percent were returned to front-line service and another 12 percent were allotted to less arduous duties. Of the permanent losses only three percent died while in hospital (seven percent of the wounded and one percent of the sick) and another five percent were discharged as invalids (eight percent of the wounded and four percent of the sick).[46]

Aside from the initial evacuation of casualties the other major responsibility of the divisional medical system was preventative hygiene. The Great War saw significant improvements in field sanitation when for the first time, soldiers were provided regular opportunities to bath and change their clothes at facilities established and run by the military. The importance of regular bathing to the soldier may be glimpsed by the attention the subject receives in most soldiers' memoirs. As one digger observed: 'I hate to draw attention to every bath we had but it was an experience worth recording.'[47] Clearly bathing was a significant morale issue for the average soldier even if the medical system was more utilitarian in its approach, as another soldier suggests:

> *At times, like cattle being put through a 'tick-dip', we were privileged to enter an army bath-establishment, and having discarded our dirt and dirty underclothes, to emerge, after having donned garments, well-worn but sterilized, and consequently free*

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[45] Ibid, pp 25–26.

[46] Mitchell and Smith, *BOHMS: Medical Casualties and Statistics*, pp 17 and 19–20.

[47] Denning, *Anzac Digger*, pp 69–70.

> *of 'chats', for the time being—but, the emphasis is on 'the time being'.*[48]

From a purely medical perspective bathing and the provision of clean uniforms helped prevent skin diseases and controlled vermin. By 1918 it was well understood that if a soldier was able to bath every ten days and change his underclothes as well as having his tunic and breeches de-loused, then skin diseases such as pediculosis and scabies could almost entirely be prevented.

On Gallipoli bathing was an improvised and an individual affair. In general, soldiers took the opportunity to have a swim and wash their clothes when they could get down to the beach. For those working in the nominal rear area along Anzac Cove this could occur daily given the weather and the degree of Turkish fire; for those in the infantry battalions it might be restricted to when they were relieved from the line or were sent on a task that took them to the beach. Given the constant water shortage, these opportunities were more than just recreational as they provided the soldier with his only opportunity to clean his body and wash his clothing, which invariably were louse-infected.[49]

When the 1st Division arrived in France it became a part of the much larger and more complex medical system. In addition to the web of medical facilities and hospitals that stretched from the front line all the way back to Britain and thence to Australia, the division also became responsible for establishing and maintaining its own divisional baths within the corps system. So soldiers of the division ran the baths while corps administered all baths and laundries. In late 1916 I ANZAC had four baths spread throughout the corps rear area and a single corps laundry. Each bath had a capacity to bathe 120 to 150 men per hour. By 1918 the Australian Corps was operating seven baths and four laundries to cater for its five divisions and corps troops.[50]

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[48] Gnr H Monteith (1st FA Bde AIF), 'Observations of no 5886', not paginated, AWM: MSS0810.

[49] See: AWM: PO1116.005.

[50] Brig Gen RA Carruthers (DAQMG I ANZAC), QMG Staff Circular Memo No 24 'Baths and Laundry', 7 November 1916, AWM25, item 101/3; and DAQMG, HQ Aust Corps Admin Instruction No 153 'Baths and Laundries', 1 January 1918, AWM25, item 101/3.

The aim of this production-line bathing was that a soldier should have the opportunity to bath every 10 to 14 days and these opportunities usually coincided with relief from the line or when they were about to return to the line.[51] The layout of the baths varied depending on the type of facility available, with breweries and factories being the most common types of building used as they could be most readily adapted. By 1917 standardised plans for baths had been developed so that buildings could be adapted or baths pre-fabricated with a simple and ergonomic layout which could cater for between 80 and 100 men an hour.[52]

As well as cleansing the body the divisional baths also provided each soldier with clean underclothes and de-loused his uniform. As the soldier moved through the baths, his breeches, tunic, trousers and puttees were ironed and brushed to kill and remove the lice and eggs. After de-lousing the uniforms were washed and dried. The aim was to provide each soldier with a clean shirt, underpants, singlet, and socks each week. For those in the trenches this allowance was increased to provide for a change of socks daily in order to reduce the incidence of trench foot. This meant that a divisional laundry was dealing with about 60,000 articles of clothing a week with another 22,000 pairs of socks if it had a single brigade in the line.[53]

When visits to the divisional baths were not possible battalions often improvised their own and the engineers and pioneers became adept at erecting temporary showers or improvised baths. When the 1st Division moved to Hazebrouck in April 1918, it left behind its established system of baths and laundries but their enterprising divisional engineers soon found a solution. A mobile shower—the 'Johnston Shower'—was developed by Sergeant Major Johnston of the 1st

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[51] For example the 1st Battalion went to divisional baths on 29 August 1916, then again over the period 13 and 14 September 1916 and again on the morning of 25 September 1916. 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 29 August and 13, 14 and 25 September 1916, AWM4, item 23/18/10

[52] Lt S Traill (1st Bn AIF), diary entry, 15 February 1918, AWM: 2DRL/0711; AWM25, item 101/1; and DADMS 3rd Aust Div, 'Lecture on "Baths and Laundries" Delivered at Corps Medical Officers School', 18 March 1918, pp 3–4, AWM27, item 305/9 part 1.

[53] DADMS 3rd Aust Div, 'Lecture on "Baths and Laundries" Delivered at Corps Medical Officers School', 18 March 1918, pp 3–4, AWM27, item 305/9 part 1; and Engineer-in-Chief, No R/868/1, 'Notes on Divisional Laundries', nd, AWM25, item 101/3.

Field Company (AIF). This improvised shower weighted less than 20 kilograms and could shower eight men in three minutes in either hot or cold water. Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of the medical system, not all soldiers survived their wounds or illness and when they died the division remained responsible for them.[54]

BURIAL AND GRAVES REGISTRATION

Soldiers killed on service have to be buried for both sanitary and morale reasons. When the 1st Division was raised it did not have a system for burying its soldiers, marking their graves and registering the place on interment. In fact previous practice had been to bury soldiers in communal graves without any individual identification. Occasionally officers or notable members of a unit might be buried individually and have a marker placed over them but this was the exception. Like many other aspects of administration this system, or lack of it, did not survive long.

The very first 1st Division deaths occurred even before it sailed from Australia. These men were buried in local civilian cemeteries. The early deaths on the voyage to Egypt were treated according to custom and they were buried at sea. In Egypt, soldiers who died in training or of illness were buried in the civilian cemeteries around Cairo and Alexandria.[55] On Gallipoli fatal casualties were interred in temporary individual gravesites where possible, although many of the dead had to be buried in communal graves especially after the heavy fighting in April, May and August. In addition, a number of the wounded or sick who died after being evacuated were buried at sea or back in Egypt, on Lemnos or Malta or even in Britain.[56]

General Bridges was the one exception to the AIF policy that all war dead were to be interred where they died. Although Bridges died at sea, through the

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[54] Stacy, *The First Battalion AIF 1914–1919*, p 75; and Acting OC 1st Fd Coy (AIF), Memorandum to CRE 1st Aust Div, 24 July 1918, AWM25, item 1010/17.

[55] Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC), *Where the Australians Rest*, prepared under instructions from the Minister of State for Defence, np, 1920, pp 66–67.

[56] IWGC, *Where the Australians Rest*, pp 57–65.

intervention of Birdwood, his body was not 'committed to the deep', rather his body was returned to Egypt where it was interred before being returned to Australia for burial at Duntroon. Until the return of the 'Unknown Soldier' in 1993, Bridges was the only 1st Division (and AIF) soldier returned home for burial.[57]

Unlike previous wars, the raising of large contingents of citizen soldiers forced the British Empire to acknowledge the feelings of loved ones who were not satisfied with the previous policy of an unmarked grave in a foreign field. The initial marking and recording the location of a soldier's grave was a unit responsibility. Corps and divisional burial officers (usually the Deputy Assistant Adjutant General) were responsible for reporting through the chain of command to the newly raised Graves Registration Commission.[58] Where an identifiable body could be located, graves were usually marked with a simple cross, often constructed by the unit pioneers or by the soldier's mates. After the war the crosses were gradually replaced under the arrangements of the Imperial War Graves Commission.[59]

DISCIPLINE

The subject of discipline in the British Army drew considerable comment during the Great War and it has been debated endlessly since.[60] This debate was

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[57] Steve Hart, 'How a Governor-General's Wife Influenced a Soldier's Return', *Canberra Historical Journal*, No 55 (March 2005) pp 13–19.

[58] Regimental burial officers were responsible for the burial of soldiers from their unit and for compiling the records of the graves and the disposal of the personal effects. Coordinating the work of the regimental burial officers was the divisional burial officer and he was responsible for: arranging the additional work parties for the burial of the dead and marking of the graves; forwarding the personal effects on to the Base; and compiling the divisional returns on the number and location of the graves. All divisional burial returns were passed to the corps burial officer. Lt Col H Farmer (AAQMG), 3rd Aust Div Circular No 26 'Burial of the Dead', 20 May 1917, AWM25, item 135/2.

[59] The Graves Registration Commission later expanded and became the Directorate of Graves Registration and Enquiries and later again it became the Imperial War Graves Commission. 'The Imperial War Graves Commission', *The Times: War Graves Number*, 10 November 1928, pp vi–xii, copy in papers of the 7th Bn AIF Association, AWM: PR 87/215, Box 3, folder 28 of 29.

[60] For some of the vast body of literature on the subject see: Cathryn Corns and John Hughes-Wilson, *Blindfold and Alone: British Military Executions in the Great War*, Cassell, London, 2001; Gerald Oram (ed), *Unquiet Graves: Comparative Perspectives on Military Executions in the First World War and Modern Memory*, Francis Boutle, London, 2005; Gerald Oram, *Military*

prompted in part by the different standards of behaviour that were evident throughout the British contingents and the different interpretations of what was good discipline and what was not. Whether Australian troops were more or less disciplined than other British Empire troops is difficult to determine a century later given the limited material upon which to base informed judgements and the fact that this subject is so clouded in myth that it often colours the perceptions of contemporary commentators. What is clear is that the different contingents of the British Army had different interpretations on the role and administration of discipline. There is no doubt that the AIF and some of the other dominion contingents expected a different standard of discipline than the old British regular army. It is also true that British officers often assumed that their authority was all they required to command but in the dominion contingents (and some New Army and Territorial formations), there was a strong sense of a mutual contract between leader and the led.[61]

Discipline in all of the British forces, including the AIF, was administered under the provisions of the British *Army Act*. Some contingents, notably the Australians, had modified the provisions of this before the war to meet local requirements. The most controversial modification was that Australian troops were not subject to the same requirements as British, Canadian, New Zealand and South African soldiers when it came to application of the death sentence. The British Army, the CEF, the NZEF and the South African contingent were all subject to the full provisions of the *Army Act*, which allowed the commander-in-chief (Hamilton on Gallipoli and Haig in France) to confirm death sentences.

Executions during World War I, Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills, 2003; Gerald Oram, *Death Sentences Passed by Military Courts of the British Army 1914–1924*, Revised Edition, Francis Boutle, London, 2005; Gerald Oram, *Worthless Men: Race, Eugenics and the Death Penalty in the British Army during the First World War*, Francis Boutle, London, 1998; Christopher Puglsey, *On the Fringe of Hell: New Zealanders and Military Discipline in the First World War*, Hodder and Stoughton, Auckland, 1991; Julian Putkowski, *British Army Mutineers 1914–1919*, Francis Boutle, London, 1998; Julian Putkowski and Julian Sykes, *Shot at Dawn*, Revised Edition, Leo Cooper, London, 1992; and Gary D Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches: Officer-Man Relations, Morale and Discipline in the British Army in the Era of the First World War*, Macmillian in association with King's College, Houndmills and London, 2000.

[61] For a comparison with French Army discipline see: Leonard V Smith, *Between Mutiny and Obedience: The Case of the French Fifth Infantry Division During World War I*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1994.

The AIF was the sole exception among the British armies and in this case sentences had to be confirmed by the Australian governor-general.[62]

Aside from the legends and half-truths surrounding the issue of AIF discipline, there is no doubt that the 1st Division had its fair share of problems. In Egypt before the Gallipoli campaign the widespread poor discipline displayed by a significant part of the fledgling division led Charles Bean to claim that 'matters were swiftly coming to a point when discipline in the AIF must either be upheld or abandoned'. Bean also observed that it was often the 'bad' characters of the division who stood out as repeat offenders and many of these were Boer War veterans and 'old' British soldiers.[63]

Many of these men could not or would not submit to military discipline or in the case of the ex-British regulars they found they could exploit the more relaxed attitude of some weak 1st Division commanders. Many of these men eventually found themselves committed to military prison. Private Frederick Purkiss (1st Battalion AIF) was an ex-British regular who had served 12 years with the Royal Army Medical Corps before joining the AIF in 1914. His first brush with the authorities occurred in Egypt where he received 21 days' detention, and on Gallipoli his behaviour only deteriorated further. In early May he was charged again and sentenced to 21 days' Field Punishment Number 2 (FPNo2). Within a fortnight he faced a Field General Courts-Martial (FGCM), again for not complying with an order and he was sentenced to another three months FPNo2. Purkiss was referred for a second FGCM on 1 June, while still undergoing his punishment, and once again he was found guilty of not complying with a lawful order and on this occasion the court sentenced him to 18 months' imprisonment with hard labour. His brigade commander, Colonel Nevill Smyth, VC confirmed his punishment but under the *Army Suspensions Act* his sentence was suspended. [64] On 19 June he faced his third FGCM and awarded a further two

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[62] For the issue of discipline in the AIF and NZEF see: Faraday, 'Half the Battle', pp 231–254; and Pugsley, *On the Fringe of Hell*, passim.

[63] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 128.

[64] The *Army (Suspension of Sentences) Act, 1915* was introduced with intention of deterring men from wilfully committing serious offences with the object of avoiding front-line service, or to

months FPNo2. On 25 September, Purkiss was incarcerated in the Gabbari Military Prison at Alexandria.[65]

Even while imprisoned Purkiss appears to have been incapable of behaving himself. In October another brush with the authorities led to another FGCM and another two years imprisonment with hard labour. On 31 January he struck one of the prison staff as well as using threatening language towards another. Having been found guilty on both charges he was sentenced to a further three years imprisonment and this was to be served concurrently with his previous sentence. Unlike many of his comrades however, Purkiss' imprisonment may well have saved his life and upon his discharge from prison on 29 April 1916, he was immediately embarked aboard the *Seang Bee* to be returned to Australia to complete his sentence and was discharged from the AIF on 4 July 1917.[66]

While Bill Gammage has dismissed the AIF's disciplinary problems by claiming that AIF soldiers 'remained incorrigibly civilian' and even Charles Bean admits 'they were never at heart a regular soldier'; the truth is that many of these men were hard cases and some appear to have volunteered with the intention to avoid their duty wherever possible and a considerable amount of the crime experienced within the 1st Division can be traced to these incorrigibles.[67]

Following the Gallipoli campaign there was a general tightening of discipline within the AIF. Greater emphasis was placed on the traditional manifestations of discipline such as saluting and attention to dress and bearing, while commanders attempted to stamp out illegal gambling. To facilitate this change,

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offer the good soldier an opportunity to reprieve themselves after a lapse in behaviour. Under the *Act* a sentence of penal servitude or imprisonment could be suspended, which meant that the soldier remained with their unit, with the sentence still 'hanging over their head'. If the soldier subsequently committed some act of gallant or meritorious conduct their sentence could be remitted. If however, the soldier continued to perform poorly or was convicted of further offences then he could have his sentence enacted and he would them be committed to prison to serve the full sentence. Lt Gen CFN Macready (AG BEF), 'Army (Suspension of Sentences) Act, 1915', 19 April 1915; Lt Col JB Wroughton (AAG BEF), 'Army (Suspension of Sentences) Act, 1916', 21 January 1916; and Lt Gen GH Fowke (AG BEF), 'Suspension of Sentences' (SS752), GHQ BEF, September 1918. All items on AWM25, item 807/1.

[65] NAA: A471, files 4671, 4672, 4673, 5674 and 6683, and B2455, file PURKISS FREDERICK.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p 31; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 127.

a separate Anzac Provost Corps was created on 10 March 1916. Despite threats that their poor disciplinary record might preclude their dispatch to France, when the 1st Division did sail in March and April 1916 the troops' conduct while travelling through France was exemplary—unfortunately it did not stay that way.[68]

Discipline problems were exacerbated on the Western Front, particularly when units were out of the line. The awarding of punishments for drunkenness and absence without leave (AWOL) were almost daily occurrences in most battalions. For many of the 'hard cases' who had survived the heavy fighting of 1916, they were quite prepared to undergo field punishment in exchange for enjoying themselves in local villages and avoiding another tour in the trenches. In the 1st Division courts-martial increased rapidly and from June 1916 to January 1917 inclusive, they averaged 50 per month. It was not the worst record among the Australian divisions but it was considerably more than other British and dominion divisions. For the more serious incidents, such as desertion, sentences ranging from nine months to five years imprisonment with hard labour were imposed.[69]

Those members of the 1st Division who were committed to prison were initially housed in British facilities. In Egypt the existing British Army detention facilities were at Abbassia Barracks but this facility soon proved inadequate for the large number of AIF inmates. To meet the growing number of Anzac prisoners a dedicated Anzac Detention Barracks was established at Heliopolis in January 1916, while more serious and hardened military criminals were committed to the Gabbari Military Prison, Alexandria.[70] To deal with the larger number of offenders who were sentenced to periods of field punishment or detention (but not imprisonment or sentenced to penal servitude) on the Western Front the military police were charged with running field punishment centres. The first of

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[68] Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, p 60–62 and 69–73; and Jeffrey Williams, 'The First AIF Overseas: 1914–16', paper presented to Australian War Memorial Conference, February 1983, pp 11–12.

[69] Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p 240; Pugsley, *Fringe of Hell*, pp 64–67; and Austin, *As Rough As Bags*, p 197.

[70] Faraday, 'Half the Battle', p 236.

these was established at the fortress of Boulogne but they soon spread up and down the British front behind the lines. When the two ANZACs arrived in France, they too established their own corps field detention barracks.

In Britain the problem was even larger and up until late 1917 AIF prisoners were sent to one of the 15 British Army military detention barracks. Problems with the British centres, including the rising number of Australian prisoners, complaints of poor medical attention and food, and a perception that the British barracks appeared to be focused on punishment rather than rehabilitation, led to the establishment of an 'AIF only' barracks. On 1 November 1917 the Australian military authorities opened the AIF Detention Barracks in what was formally His Majesty's Prison Lewes. Lewes was built in 1853 and it was mainly used as the local prison for Sussex. The prison could house 336 prisoners with 60 separate cells for prisoners who were also suffering from venereal disease and required medical treatment. Unlike the military prisons, this barracks was more like a field punishment centre with the emphasis on rehabilitation and training rather than incarceration and punishment.[71]

Lewes appears to have established a good track record in rehabilitating a substantial proportion of its inmates. In fact the majority of the AIF soldiers committed to Lewes left the barracks rated as of 'good' character and most had at least part of their sentences remitted. A good example is Private Daniel Boyle of the 1st Divisional Ammunition Column (AIF) who faced his first court-martial after three years service in late 1917. Having been found guilty of being AWOL he was sentenced to 273 days detention. Because of his previous good service however, he was rated as being of 'good' character. He appears to have been something of a model prisoner because he was released having served only 57 days of his sentence. He left to join the Overseas Training Brigade, with the other 216 days of his sentence being remitted, and he later served in the 1st Trench Mortar Brigade, embarking for return to Australia in September 1919.

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[71] Graham Wilson, 'A Prison of Our Own: The AIF Detention Barracks 1917–1919', *Sabretache*, Vol 46, No 2 (June 2005), pp 13–30; and Butler, *AOHMS*, Vol III, p 171.

But not all diggers made good and every 1st Division unit had a small number of 'problem children'.[72]

Ernest Besley was a 1st Division soldier who faced three courts-martial in just 16 months. He enlisted in the AIF as a private in June 1915 and was allotted to the 8th Reinforcements, 1st Battalion (AIF), joining his unit following its withdrawal from the Peninsula. He then served on the Western Front facing court-martial for the first time in May 1918 while he was attached to the Overseas Training Brigade. His second court-martial occurred as a result of his involvement with the 1st Battalion mutiny in October 1918 and on this occasion he was found guilty of desertion and sentenced to three years penal servitude. While he was undergoing his sentence he was court-martialled again in September 1919. Nor were disciplinary problems confined only to the diggers.[73]

Officers and NCOs were expected to maintain higher standards of personal behaviour than their soldiers and if they failed to do so their treatment could be uncompromising and harsh. AIF records demonstrate that officers who failed to act in the expected manner were subject to a range of censures and in extreme cases could be dismissed from the service. On Gallipoli Lieutenant Arthur Dignam, a company commander with the 2nd Battalion (AIF), was 'frog-marched' before his CO by four of his sergeants who complained that he had neglected the men under his command. Brought before a General Court-Martial (GCM) on a charge of drunkenness, he was found guilty and sentenced to be dismissed from the service. His sentence was promulgated along with those of seven other officers, including five who were also cashiered for drunkenness.[74]

Another officer to meet this fate was Lieutenant Geoffrey Lemon. Lemon was a civil engineer before the war and enlisted in August 1914 and was allotted to the 4th LH Regiment (AIF). Following service on Gallipoli he one of a number of troopers commissioned to fill vacancies in the infantry. Lemon joined the 3rd

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[72] 'Register of the Detention Barrack Lewes', AWM25, item 231/5.

[73] AWM8, item 23/18/2; NAA: A471, files A471, 2128, 7788 and 12846; and NAA: B2455, file BESLEY EA.

[74] 2nd Military District Orders, No 51, April 1917.

Battalion (AIF) and saw service on the Western Front until evacuated to Britain due to illness. On 17 August 1916 he reported to Administrative HQ AIF in Horseferry Road, London having been passed by a medical board as fit for service. He was directed to report for duty but did not do so and was later apprehended drunk in a London hotel. Charged with drunkenness, although it is clear that he had committed other offences including being AWOL, his trial by GCM was heard on 4 September by 11 officers including the president who was a major general. His sentence was relatively light as he only received a reprimand. A little over a month later however, he was again charged for the same offence. Two weeks later he faced another GCM with the same board president and this time he was found guilty on both charges of disobeying a lawful command and drunkenness and sentenced to be dismissed from the service. His conviction was passed to the King for confirmation and reviewed by the Judge Advocate General for legality and he was then cashiered.[75]

Major Jasper Magee (6th Battalion AIF) was luckier when he evaded court-martial in 1917. On the night of 29/30 October, while he was in temporary command of the battalion, Magee was relieved of his duties because he was incapable of exercising command and there was strong evidence that he was drunk. The GOC, Harold Walker, placed him under arrest and considered court-martialling him but because of his previous good service on Gallipoli where he had won the Military Cross, Walker decided to send him home and he was allowed to resign his commission. NCOs also faced similar penalties if they transgressed.[76]

Thomas Haworth was an English-born AIF volunteer who rose to become a Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) before being court-martialled twice. Haworth had served in the British Army before immigrating and in October 1914 he volunteered for the AIF and was allotted as a reinforcement to the 4th Battalion (AIF). By the time he embarked for overseas he had been promoted corporal and he joined his battalion in Egypt and then served on Gallipoli where he was

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[75] BB Cubitt, letter to the Under Secretary of State Colonial Office, 3 November 1916, NAA: A11803 (A11803/1), 1917/89/38; and NAA: A471, files 8125 and 18129.

[76] NAA: B2455, file MAGEE JASPER KENNETH GORDON.

wounded twice and in September he become the unit RSM. Evacuated sick to Britain towards the end of the campaign, he was court-martialled for going AWOL and escaping from custody. For this he received the relatively light punishment of being reduced to the rank of sergeant and forfeiting 21 days' pay. He rejoined the 4th Battalion in France in July 1916 where he quickly rose to be a company sergeant major only to be court-martialled later in the year for drunkenness, attempted rape and assault of a French national. On this occasion a FGCM sentenced him to ten years penal servitude and he was committed to military prison. Early in the following year his sentence was reduced to two years imprisonment with hard labour. Having served just a year of his term he was released in late 1917 and the remainder of his sentence was remitted. Wounded a third time in 1918 he returned to the front only to be killed in action in September 1918 holding the rank of lance corporal.[77]

At the same time that Thomas Haworth was killed, the 1st Division suffered its one and only major breakdown of combat discipline. On 19 September 1918 126 members from the 1st Battalion (AIF) refused to return to the line in one of only a handful of cases of combat refusal experienced by the AIF. The incident occurred at the end of the tough fighting following the Amiens counterattack and when this unit had been particularly hard hit with officer casualties. After four-and-a-half years of service and some of the bloodiest battles in the history of the British Army, this was the only occasion when a large group of men from the 1st Division refused to fight.[78]

In the end the disparity between Australian and British attitudes towards discipline simply reflected the nature of the officers who were expected to administer the system within their respective armies. Claude Benson, a

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[77] AWM8, item 23/21/2; AWM: Roll of Honour Database; NAA: A471, files 14396, 14397 and 17877; and NAA: B2455, file HAWORTH T 1270.

[78] JJ MacKenzie, 'A Disabling Minority: Mutiny in the First Battalion AIF, September 1918', BA Honours thesis, University College ADFA, Canberra, 1988; Ivan D Chapman, *Iven G Mackay—Citizen and Soldier*, Melway Publishing, Melbourne, 1975, pp 112–114; Dale Blair, *Dinkum Diggers*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton South, 2001, pp 157–164; Putkowski, *British Army Mutineers 1914–1919*, pp 86–87; Ashley Ekins, 'Fighting to exhaustion: Morale, discipline and combat effectiveness in the armies of 1918', in Ekins (ed), *1918 Year of victory*, pp 111–129; and AWM93, item 12/6/230.

decorated NCO and subaltern who served with the 9th Battalion (AIF) took umbrage with some of the naive comments offered by journalists which took a superficial view of the subject and failed to see that the Australian and British disciplinary systems had more in common than was obvious to the unseasoned eye. Benson left a good description of how he believed the two systems differed and it is worth quoting his views, which he felt necessary to express in a letter to his mother explaining the misconceptions that had been created by an article written by the British correspondent Ashmead Bartlett.

> *…on reading the article referred to….The only inference one can draw is that we Officers are merely figure-heads, puppets, that we have no say in the discipline and administration of affairs, in short, there is no discipline in our Army, and that whenever the men feel inclined to work or fight, they do so, under the able direction of one of their fellow men, and we are ignored…. His remarks are based on, and influenced by his knowledge of the Imperial Army, where discipline as he knows it has been steadily ingrained through past years of peace conditions, when even the slightest offence may not pass unnoticed, and so when a certain work has to be performed, a certain point of the enemies line attacked, they know nothing further than that they are to get there; but with our men, before leaving our own lines, we call the men together and briefly outline the course we intend adopting, because of so-and-so, and as soon as we arrive there, so-and-so will happen, and on our flanks so-and-so will protect us.*[79]

The last word on the AIF's discipline however, may be left to one of its sternest critics. When the Duke of Cambridge enquired on the nature of discipline among his wartime troops, Sir Douglas Haig surprised the old duke by telling him that the Australians were among the best disciplined forces in France: 'When they are ordered to attack they always do so' and in that he as generally

[79] Lt C Benson (9th Bn AIF), copy of letter to mother, 24 September 1915, AWM: 1DRL/0112.

correct. [80] On the other hand Haig also thought that the Australian divisions never attained the disciplined professionalism of the Canadians and the New Zealanders and in that he was also probably correct.[81]

PERSONNEL SERVICES

Although the disciplinary system was an important factor in sustaining the cohesion of the 1st Division, it is neither the sole contributor nor in the end the final arbiter of that state. The life of a 1st Division soldier during the Great War was much more than an interminable succession of tours in the trenches broken only by participation in bloody battles after which punishment and reward were handed out in equal doses. Soldiers required relaxation and a period of leave was the most sought after source of personal rejuvenation. Just as important on a day-to-day basis was access to canteens, sport, entertainment and especially links with loved ones at home. These small but important measures helped keep soldiers physically and mentally intact during the trials of front-line service.

The leaders of the 1st Division learned the hard way that morale and discipline go hand-in-hand and that neglect of amenities and recreation could have disastrous effect, while the efficient use of personnel services could have an almost miraculous effect, even on the battle-scarred veterans.[82] Initially most of the recreational facilities provided to the 1st Division were improvised by units, sponsored by the chaplains or more commonly provided by various philanthropic organisations. A number of representatives from these organisations accompanied the first contingent, including representatives from the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and the Salvation Army. In Egypt these men were allotted to the five main formations of the contingent and they were instrumental in establishing what limited wholesome entertainment was available to the troops. The Salvation Army in particular provided a number

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[80] Quoted in CEW Bean, *Anzac to Amiens: A Shorter History of the Australian Fighting Services in the First World War*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1961, p 287.

[81] JG Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914–1918*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1990, p 169.

[82] WJ Bradby, 'Polygon Wood and Broodseinde', *Stand To*, Vol 8, No 5 (September–October 1963) p 17.

of representatives both as chaplains and as 'hutment officers' to staff the various recreation establishments. Undeniably the most famous of the 'Sally-Men' was William 'Fighting Mac' McKenzie who served a total of three-and-a-half years on Gallipoli and the Western Front with the division.[83] During the Gallipoli campaign few of these facilities were available and it was only after the onset of winter that the YMCA was able to establish a rudimentary canteen at Anzac, while the 1st Division also established its own more substantial affair—but it was all too little and too late.[84]

Arguably, the largest philanthropic organisation was the Australian Comforts Fund (ACF). This voluntary organisation, established and paid for by donations in Australia, provided a range of services to the troops and unlike some of the religiously affiliated groups or the Red Cross, the ACF was universally well regarded by the troops. One soldier recalled:

> *On coming out of the front line we passed a terrace of deserted houses in one of which the Australian Comforts Fund people had established themselves. At any hour of the day or night, troops passing in or out of the line could get a cup…of cocoa or soup and two or three biscuits. Many's the blessing they received from hungry or chilled troops.*[85]

And one of the greatest gifts of the ACF was the provision of fresh socks. The knitting of socks might appear a rather quaint and even trivial matter today but as one Gallipoli veteran recalled:

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[83] William McKenzie was a Scots-born Salvation Army officer who served as chaplain with the 4th Battalion (AIF). In August 1914 he volunteered his services and was appointed a chaplain fourth class, becoming the sole Salvation Army chaplain with the first contingent. He served in Egypt where he soon made his presence felt, joining in the men's recreations taking particular delight in boxing contests. On Gallipoli he established a reputation as a simple and straight forward man who could not tolerate hypocrisy and his bravery in action attending and recovering the wounded and burying the dead left a deep impression on all of those who came in contact with him. Following further service on the Western Front his renown spread beyond the 1st Division and he became one of the most popular men in the AIF. Michael McKernan, 'McKenzie, William (1869–1947)', *ADB*, Vol 10, pp 305–306.

[84] John Bond, *The Army that went with the Boys: A Record of the Salvation Army Work with the Australian Imperial Force*, Salvation Army National Headquarters, Melbourne, 1919 pp 8 and 92; and Bean, AOH, Vol I, p 127 and Vol II, p 851.

[85] Dudley Jackson, 'Flanders, 1917', *Stand To*, Vol 11, No 3 (July–September 1967) p 11.

> *There were plenty of periods on the Peninsular* [sic]*…when boots and socks would not be removed for days and often there was hardly enough water for tea let alone washing, so that socks suffered badly. The smell can only be imagined and to discard old socks for new was near rapture.*[86]

As a pair of socks might only last about two weeks under hard, front-line conditions, the 1st Division required in the order of 450,000 pairs of socks each year. But socks were only the tip of the proverbial iceberg and there were myriad needs that the army did not provide for.[87]

In addition to philanthropic support, all major 1st Division units established a regimental canteen which provided dry goods at reasonable cost to the soldiers. These 'Regimental Institutes' were established under the control of the central Expeditionary Force Canteen, which in turn was just one of the British Army canteen services established in different theatres.[88] In a unit, a junior officer under the oversight of the unit second-in-command normally ran the service, with a trustworthy soldier allotted to the selling duties. The goods were purchased at a five per cent discount and sold to the soldiers at canteen prices. The profit made on sales was used to boost regimental funds, which in turn were used to provide non-issue items and supplementary goods for holidays such as Easter and Christmas and for additional food and prizes for sports carnivals.[89] Funds might also be expended to improve the quality of life for the troops, as was the case in the 12th Battalion (AIF) during the bitter winter of 1916–17 when '[A] considerable amount of regimental funds was expended in purchasing straw in order to make the billets more comfortable for the men.'[90]

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[86] Kempe, *Participation*, p 50.

[87] Melanie Oppenheimer, *All Work No Pay: Australian Civilian Volunteers in War*, Ohio Productions, Walcha, 2002, p 7.

[88] Sir John Fortescue, *A Short Account of Canteens in the British Army*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1928, pp 33–34 and 48.

[89] In France the 1st Battalion (AIF) canteen was established in September 1916 and was an immediate success, with food for the battalion sports carnival being provided by the battalion fund. 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 14, 15 and 22 September 1916, AWM4, item 23/18/11.

[90] Newton, *The Story of the Twelfth*, p 114.

Aside from clean socks and a dry place to sleep, the soldier's other great desire was mail. Mail was a significant issue to soldiers, having a disproportionate effect on morale as a post-war article observed:

> *The importance of regular delivery of letters to the troops cannot be urged too strongly, the feeling of isolation produced—particularly in overseas theatres of war—by non-receipt of letters has a very bad moral* [sic] *effect, while an efficient postal service providing regular communication between the soldier and his friends at home produces a feeling of confidence which goes far towards success in battle.*[91]

This lesson was only slowly learned and the problems encountered in the first few months after the 1st Division's dispatch overseas were to have far reaching consequences.[92]

When the first contingent convoy docked in Colombo on its way to Egypt, Major Jeremy Taylor March (CO 1st Divisional Train) as the officer responsible for the mail services within the division was dispatched to the local post office to deposit 34 bags of mail, 33 bags to be returned to Australia and a single bag for on-forwarding to Britain. He also logged a total of £86 worth of private cablegrams to Australia.[93] In Egypt the AIF contingent received about 75 bags of mail per week. By April 1915 personal mail grew to 200 bags and by August the total inward mail had increased to 1163 bags a week. Commanders realised that mail provide a great boost to morale with incoming mail being eagerly awaited, while delays and the loss of mail were particularly hard felt.[94]

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[91] Maj WG Lindsell, 'Administrative Lessons of the Great War', *Journal of the United Services Institute*, 66 (February–November 1926) p 716.

[92] The following section is based on: Bob Emery, *Australian Imperial Forces Postal History 1914–1918*, RC Emery, Worthing, 1984; and Bob Emery, *Supplement to the Australian Imperial Forces Postal History 1914–1918*, RC Emery, Worthing, 1988.

[93] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, AWM4, item 1/42/1, part 1.

[94] 'Murdoch Mail Report', NAA: MP367, 564/4/258.

Procedures for handling mail were promulgated at Anzac in early June and this provided for a daily mail run from Anzac to the Mudros post office. But part of the problem, and one that the HQ could not fix, was that like any other commodity mail was subject to enemy interference and the weather. On the morning of 6 August the mail lighter on its way from Mudros to Anzac capsized and all the mail was lost. The lost mail amounted to 110 bags, the majority of which was destined for the 1st Division.[95]

When the troops were notified that henceforth their mail would go directly back to Australia there was considerable relief, as Gunner Leo Gwyther noted: 'We are to get our mail after this week straight from Australia & the return mail is to be sent back to them from here….it was about time as we had no mail [for] 7 weeks.'[96] The problem was that the divisional postal services were not equipped to deal with the quantity of mail and the large number of casualties suffered on Gallipoli compounded their difficulties. The early failure of the medical system to maintain adequate records and their failure to advise the postal clerks meant that soldiers often failed to receive their mail.

Because of the initial problems with mail and the ensuing scandal occasioned by the troops' complaints, the Australian Prime Minister William Morris Hughes sent the journalist Keith Murdoch as his personal emissary to Egypt and Gallipoli to investigate the matter.[97] Following Murdoch's report the government moved quickly to fix the problem with more staff and better trained soldiers being allocated to the mail services. While some problems continued to be experienced, particularly during offensives, in general the mail system improved and became relatively efficient.[98]

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[95] 1st Aust Div, Div Orders No 144, 3 June 1915, AWM27, item 352/17; and 1st Aust Div, 'Admin Memorandum No 60', 27 August 1915, AWM27, item 352/16.

[96] Gnr L Gwyther (2nd BAC AIF), diary entry, 14 July 1915, SLV: MS11300, MSB401.

[97] Keith Murdoch's younger brother Ivan Murdoch served as a private with the 8th Battalion (AIF) on the Western Front before being commissioned and awarded the MC and Bar for his gallantry at Hazebrouck in April 1918 and Lihons in August. NAA: B2455, file MURDOCH IVON GEORGE.

[98] Faraday, 'Half the Battle', pp 147–148 and 150–152.

Following the withdrawal from Gallipoli a separate Australian Army Postal Corps was established and the men to staff the divisional post offices were, where possible, drawn from ex-civilian postal workers serving with the AIF. At this time the 1st Division had 16 members of the newly formed corps serving throughout its ranks.[99]

An equally important issue for troops deployed overseas for extended periods was the matter of leave. Bridges' policy during the voyage from Australia was not to grant leave at any of the ports of call. A number of cases occurred where this policy was breached but this was stopped on his order as soon as he found out. On arrival in Egypt the officers and soldiers of the 1st Division were immediately attracted to the sights of ancient Egypt and at least one historian has chronicled the Australian soldiers' service as a tourist.[100] From 10 December official leave was granted for the members of the division, with up to 20 percent of the men and a third of the officers of each unit being granted leave each day after last parade at about 4.00 pm through until 10.00 pm. Admittedly this was also an attempt to control the crowding in the city and check the unauthorised 'French leave' that many soldiers took without awaiting permission.[101]

On Gallipoli the division was unable to grant leave because of the high casualties, the lack of rear-area facilities and the shortage of transport to take soldiers to a suitable leave locality. The exceptions were those soldiers who were wounded and evacuated to Egypt, Malta or Britain. Casualties evacuated to Britain were granted 14 days' leave after their release from hospital. For the soldiers back on the Peninsula, the best they could hope for was a brief respite on Lemnos but this was not leave as soldiers remained under close supervision and there was an absence of recreational facilities. Although most soldiers

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[99] Maj T Griffiths, letter to Commandant AIF HQ, 14 March 1916; and 'Postal Services, ANZAC. Seniority List'. Both on AWM25, item 61/1.

[100] Richard White, 'The Soldier As Tourist: The Australian Experience of the Great War', *War and Society*, Vol 5, No 1 (May 1987), 63–77; and Richard White, 'Europe and the six-bob-a-day tourist: the Great War as a grand tour or getting civilised', *Australian Studies*, No 5 (April 1991), pp 122–139.

[101] *AIFO: No 45*, 6 December 1914; and Hurst, *Game to the Last*, p 22.

enjoyed their break from the Peninsula, most were equally scathing of the poor organisation and absence of recreational facilities.[102]

Following the withdrawal, the 1st Division was concentrated at its new training camp at Tel-el-Kebir 110 kilometres to the northeast of Cairo. Charles Bean, in what can only be regarded as a gross understatement, described the men's reaction to this as being 'somewhat disappointed'. Although the removal of the veterans from the immediate pleasures and sins of Cairo helped to curb the illegal absenteeism which plagued the division's first stay in Egypt, in the first five days after its return over 50 men from the division went AWOL or overstayed their leave. For the remainder, they had to be content with a daily quota of two percent of men of each unit being granted two days' leave in Cairo.[103]

As with most personnel administration matters, leave became more regular once the 1st Division transferred to France. Almost immediately after I ANZAC arrived Birdwood instituted a policy of granting leave to Britain for soldiers and officers. Initially the authorised leave period was seven days. Given the limited shipping facilities to transport the returnees and the operational need to maintain units at a fighting strength, it was almost a year before the 1st Division's soldiers had worked through the roster of their first leave.[104]

'Blighty leave' was allocated on roster basis and its availability was contingent on whether the officer or soldier could be spared when their turn came up. Initially the leave allocation was limited to a maximum of 31 men from the division each day, with the leave period commencing from the time the soldier left Boulogne for the trip over the channel and ended when he returned. Each of the infantry brigades could send seven men on leave each day while the divisional artillery could send five and so forth down to the pioneer battalion, divisional train and medical units which each had an allocation of one per day.

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[102] Faraday, 'Half the Battle', pp 166–167.

[103] Faraday, 'Half the Battle', p 241; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, p 12.

[104] Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 86–87; Pte A Coates (7th Bn AIF), diary entry 27 April 1916, SLV MS10345, MSB198; Gnr K Kul (1st DAC AIF), diary entries, 4–15 May 1916, SLV MS9638 MSB65; and Lt Col A Sturdee (ADMS), diary entries 22 and 30 May 1916, ADFA: MS183.

This allocation was gradually increased so that by May between 32 and 33 men were being sent on leave each day, with a total of 226 for the division each week. In the following month however, this was slashed to 129 and then to 56 per week as the campaign season commenced.[105]

Following the heavy fighting of 1916 leave became more generous both in quantity and regularity. The leave period was eventually raised to ten days and Birdwood also gradually increased the number of men allowed on leave to Britain. In May 1916 this was limited to 100 men per day for all of the AIF but this steadily grew and by 1917 as many as 300 men per day were reporting to the AIF's HQ in Horseferry Road. Even as casualties mounted and fewer replacements arrived, the number of soldiers released for leave increased especially during the quieter months of winter. Over the last winter of the war, prior to the German spring offensive in March 1918, the 1st Division probably had close to 1000 men continuously in Britain or in Paris on leave, and this was at a time when the infantry divisions were habitually under-strength.[106]

In addition to receiving regular leave as part of their service, soldiers who were wounded could also expect to receive an additional period of leave as part of their convalescence. This was normally granted after their release from hospital and before joining a Command Depot in preparation for their return to the front. Paradoxically this is one of the reasons why soldiers could look forward to being wounded but only if it was a 'Blighty' wound or perhaps an even more serious 'Aussy' wound.[107] On average there was a six-month turn-around for a wounded

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[105] Maj GC Somerville (DAAQMG 1st Aust Div), Admin Memorandum No 4, 27 April 1916, AWM4, item 1/42/14 appendix D; Maj GC Somerville, Admin Memorandum No 17, 7 May 1916, AWM4, item 1/42/15 appendix C; Maj GC Somerville, Admin Memorandums Nos 36, 37 and 41, 6, 8 and 14 June 1916, AWM4, item 1/42/17.

[106] Faraday quotes a letter from Birdwood to Pearce dated 18 January 1918 which indicates that during the winter of 1917–18 the AIF had a total of 4000 men continuously in England on leave as well as others in Paris. It is reasonable to expect that 1st Division would have had a combined total of not less than 1000 for both locations. Faraday, 'Half the Battle', p 168.

[107] A 'Blighty One' in the soldier's language was a wound of sufficient severity to cause the recipient to be evacuated to Britain for treatment and this invariably allowed a period of convalescence and leave before returning to the front. An 'Aussy' was a wound was even more serious and one which was so severe as to cause the Australian recipient to be medically downgraded and invalided to Australia. Brophy and Partridge, *The Long Trail*, p 86; and Arthur and Ramson, *WH Downing's Digger Dialects*, p 10.

soldier sent to Britain and three months for a soldier who did not leave France and at least part of this was due to the allocation of convalescence leave.[108] Adding to the enjoyment of regular leave was the relatively high rate of pay Australian service personnel received.

Most accounts of the AIF's pay system are limited to the simple observation that the Australian solider was one of the best-paid soldiers of the Great War. This is then used to support the notion that the AIF was a democratic force especially in comparison with the British Army. What is often forgotten is that the AIF's officers were also among the best-paid officers. Without conducting a detailed analysis of the respective pay rates for all ranks, which is beyond the scope of this study, it is worth noting that all of the dominion contingents maintained a relatively 'democratic' (that is generous) pay structure. In addition the pay structure for the dominions was relatively flat in comparison with that of the British Army, so that the relative differences between ranks groups within the dominion armies was not as pronounced as it was in the British Army.[109]

Although not a key appointment of the division, the Paymaster was a crucial member in the GOC's staff and his task was not a simple one. As well as overseeing the payment of all of the 1st Division's personnel he also supervised the impress accounts managed by each of the major units and he would be called upon from time to time to pay those personnel of the division who might be detached for service to other formations.[110] These tasks involved the receipt and handling of a large quantities of cash and on any given payday in France the division might require anywhere between FRF134,000 and FRF717,000. In

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[108] Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 178–179.

[109] For example, whereas a lieutenant in the AIF earned nearly three times the pay of one of his soldiers, in the British Army a lieutenant earned nearly nine times as much as a private. So while the pay rates for AIF officers were more compressed than their British counterparts, the disparity in pay between the commissioned officers and their soldiers only increased the higher the rank. Hence a lieutenant colonel in the AIF might earn more than six times what one of his soldiers earned, a British Army lieutenant colonel earned 23 times what his soldiers earned. COA, *Journals of the Senate*, Vol I, 1914–1917, No 101 (21 September 1916) pp 442–443; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 42–43.

[110] For example in France the 1st Division's Paymaster was called upon to pay AIF personnel attached to HQ Fifth Army. Paymaster 1st Aust Div, 15 and 29 July 1918, AWM27, item 5/3/8.

a month, normally involving two paydays, the Paymaster dealt with cash totalling anywhere between £50,000 and £85,000.[111]

Nor was Paymaster's job without its dangers and in late 1918 there were several daring daylight robberies by well-organised and desperate gangs of deserters operating in the rear areas. The situation was sufficiently dangerous to require an armed guard of an NCO and three soldiers to escort the cash boxes and even this proved insufficient. The 1st Division's Paymaster, Lieutenant John Bird, recommended the arming of the Paymaster warrant officer and staff sergeant with automatic weapons.[112]

ADMINISTRATIVE MOVES

The other side of the administrative 'coin' was logistics. As the equal partner of personnel administration, logistics covers the separate but linked activities revolving around the movement of personnel and stores, supply, and ordnance. As such logistics encompasses those aspects of administration dealing with transportation; accommodation; the preparation, supply, storage and distribution of rations, ammunition and all other commodities including potable water; and animal husbandry. Solving the logistics dilemma was one of the signature successes of the British Army during the Great War and it is an area that is almost exclusively ignored in Australian histories. The British Army's achievement was all the more notable given how unprepared its small professional army was in 1914 for a large, industrial-scale continental commitment.

The 1st Division spent a considerable part of its wartime service simply in moving from theatre to theatre and within the area of operations. In an era before large-scale air movement much of this movement entailed travel by sea or train and inevitably led to long-distance moves by foot. Administrative movement includes all the moves made by the division and its subordinate units away from the battlefield.

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[111] Paymaster 1st Aust Div, February, May, October and November 1918, AWM27, items 5/3/3, 5/3/6, 5/3/11 and 5/3/12.

[112] Paymaster 1st Aust Div, May and October 1918, AWM27, items 5/3/6 and 5/3/11.

The four main voyages undertaken by the division as a body were those from Australia to Egypt, Egypt to Gallipoli and back, and then to France. The first voyage from Australia to Egypt in December 1914 took about five weeks. The voyage from Egypt to Gallipoli in April 1915 took about two weeks, which included the wait at Lemnos; while the return journey to Egypt in December, at the end of the Peninsula campaign, took only a week. The final divisional voyage from Egypt to southern France in March 1916 took on average a week. In all the division spent 66 days travelling at sea.[113]

While the division's sea time is relatively modest, all officers and soldiers spent considerably more time afloat than the above figure indicates. In the first year-and-a-half all divisional reinforcements were shipped to Egypt and thence to Gallipoli with the two voyages taking on average about six weeks. After the move to the Western Front the voyage to Britain for Australian reinforcements took on average about nine weeks. Those wounded and given leave spent further periods on hospital ships and sea transports. Most members of the division also spent at least another six weeks at sea returning to Australia at the end of the war.[114] Indeed some individuals spent significant periods of their service at sea. By way of example Major (later Lieutenant Colonel) Geoffrey McCrae (7th Battalion AIF) calculated that by the end of the Gallipoli campaign, he had travelled on 12 different vessels for a total of 119 days. This represents nearly a quarter of his time in uniform, from August 1914 up until his arrival back in Egypt at the end of the Gallipoli campaign.[115]

If the 1st Division spent much of its time engaged in administrative moves at sea, the most frequent moves it made were those where the troops were railed or marched. Its first major rail journey was undertaken when the division first

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[113] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, December 1914–March 1916, AWM4, items 1/42/1 part 1–1/42/14 part 1.

[114] Doug Hunter, 'Voyages to the War: the AIF at sea', *Sabretache*, Vol 46, No 1 (March 2005), p 6.

[115] The vessels were the *Hororata* (51 days), *Mashobra* (40 days), *Seeng Choon* (five days), HMS *Hythe* (one day), the *Clacton* (one day), the *Surada* (four days), the *Soudan* (four days), the *Huntsgreen* (six days), the *Osmanieh* (one day), the *Abbassieh* (one quarter day), HMS *Laforey* (five days), and the *Alcaperieh* (one day). Maj G McCrae (7th Bn AIF), endnote in Diary II, AWM: 1DRL/427 Box 42, file 12/11/104.

deployed to France, being railed from Marseilles to the British sector north of the Somme River. These long-distance rail moves were invariably made in French cattle trucks, each capable of carrying 40 troops or eight horses.[116]

To move a division over several hundred kilometres on a wartime rail system was no small feat. To give just one example, in August 1916 the 1st Division was relieved on the Somme and moved to southern Belgium where it was to garrison the line in the Ypres Salient. The move required a total of 41 separate trains, each being configured to carry one major unit and one or several minor units. This amount of railway traffic had to be spread over three entraining points, with the division's units marching to either Doullens North, Doullens South or Authieule stations. The trains began arriving at each of these stations on the early evening of 25 August and they continued to arrive at three-hourly intervals for the next day and a half until the last train departed in the early afternoon of 27 August. In Belgium the trains began depositing the division at three separate stations on 26 August and two days later, at 10.00 pm on 28 August the detrainment was complete and the last of the troops were moving to their billets while the Divisional Train began preparations to receive division's supplies at its new supply 'Railhead'.[117]

SUPPLY

The other half of the divisional logistics system was supply. The term 'supply' in the British Army during the Great War was used as a convenient abbreviation to designate the provision of ammunition, clothing, rations, fodder, water, canteen stores and mail. The British Army introduced a new system of transport and supply in 1912 and this system, adopted by both the pre-war Commonwealth

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[116] These trucks acquired the nickname 'Hommes-Forty' because of the legend 'Hommes 40, Chevaux 8', which was inscribed on the side. Arthur and Ramson, *WH Downing Digger Dialects*, p 102.

[117] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, August 1916, appendix F, AWM4, item 1/43/19; and Admin Staff HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 26 and 28 August 1916, AWM4, item 1/43/19.

Military Forces and later by the AIF, remained essentially unchanged throughout the war—with one significant modification.[118]

Logisticians talk of two general systems of supply: the 'pull system' and the 'push system'. Under a 'pull system' formations send back demands along the supply chain to the base identifying all of the stores and commodities that they require for a given period. The supply network then collects these items and sends them forward. This system is precise but slow and unresponsive when dealing with large forces, although well suited to small-scale operations habitually conducted by the pre-war British Army. Under a 'push system' the rear logistics staff automatically pushes forward at regular intervals standardised packages of supply items to meet the day-to-day needs of the formations. While this system can be wasteful, it is well suited to large-scale operations where organisations are homogeneous or at least largely similar.[119]

At the beginning of the war the British Army relied on a pull system. Quickly however, the steady growth in the size of the BEF and the prodigious consumption of ammunition on a previously undreamt of scale saw the supply system begin to collapse. The solution was to shift to a push system and to reduce the burden on the staff by introducing standardised ‘packs’ of commodities that could be adjusted for any local variations. This simple albeit revolutionary change simplified the whole supply process although it took some time to develop and refine and at least initially on Gallipoli the 1st Division was forced to operate under the old scheme.[120]

Although the division only took responsibility for the receipt and issue of supply items within its area of responsibility, it is worth briefly examining the whole supply chain to appreciate the part the division played in this complex system. In theory the 1st Division’s supply chain began at the national base (Australia)

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[118] Lt Col EE Carter, ‘The New Transport System: Its Principles and their Application’, *Journal of the RUSI* (May 1912), reprinted in *Commonwealth Military Journal*, Vol 3, No 2 (August 1912) pp 154–186; and Brown, *British Logistics on the Western Front*, pp 33–34.

[119] Brown, *British Logistics on the Western Front*, p 83.

[120] Brown, *British Logistics on the Western Front*, pp 83–84; and Faraday, ‘Half the Battle’, pp 190–194.

although most supply items came from Britain, with the exception of mail and some items of uniform. From the national base (Australia or Britain) the supply chain flowed across the sea lines-of-communication to an in-theatre port or ports, which served as the advanced base for the force. While the 1st Division was in Egypt, Bridges established an AIF Intermediate Base at Alexandria, while the MEF's Advanced Base was established on Lemnos. When the 1st Division moved to the Western Front its advanced base changed to a group of northern French ports along the English Channel that serviced the BEF.[121]

From the advanced base the supply line ran along the lines-of-communication, usually over the existing rail network although it also used local canals where possible. The supplies came forward to a 'Railhead', which was any locality on the railway system, at the nearest point to the division being supplied, and where supplies and ammunition could be off-loaded onto the motor vehicles of the divisional supply column and ammunition park. The columns and parks, although titled 'divisional', were in fact corps troops however, they were usually allocated on the basis of one to each division; hence the 1st Divisional Supply Column (AIF) and the 1st Ammunition Park (AIF) both supported the 1st Division during its service in France.

From the Railhead, supplies other than ammunition were transported by the divisional supply column in bulk to a 'Rendezvous' where it was met by the divisional senior supply officer from the divisional train. This officer then accounted for the supplies and escorted the column to the 'Refilling Point'. The Refilling Point was selected by the supply officer as the most appropriate site where the supplies could be transferred to the division's transport. Hence its location had to be close to the divisional area and certainly not more than 24 kilometres from the regimental transport lines. This was important since the transfer of supplies was conducted simultaneously with their break-up into unit lots. The supplies were then transported in the horse-drawn wagons of the

[121] For a detailed assessment of the supply and equipment relationship between Australia and Britain in the Great War see: Faraday, 'Half the Battle', chapters 5, 6 and 8.

divisional train to the 'Delivery Points' where the unit quartermasters took charge.[122]

Ammunition was handled separately although in a similar fashion. Shipped from a national base port to the advance base, ammunition was then moved by train to the Railhead where the divisional ammunition park collected it and delivered it in bulk to special ammunition Refilling Points. Here the ammunition was broken into lots and the divisional ammunition column took these forward to the ammunition Delivery Point, which for the artillery might be either at or just behind the gun batteries. This was how the system worked in theory although there were often local adjustments, notably during the Gallipoli campaign.[123]

Logistic planning within the 1st Division was the responsibility of the three A&Q staff officers, while implementation of plans and the day-to-day operations of ordnance and supply fell to the Deputy Assistant Director Ordnance Services and the CO 1st Divisional Train. For the Gallipoli landings two supply ships, the *Trewellard* and the *Edenmore*, were established as the main supply depot for the landings with the aim of maintaining not less than a seven day reserve of supplies and forage behind the formations until such time as it was possible to establish field depots ashore. For the 1st Division however, supply was not the initial problem since stores and ammunition could be landed directly on the beach; rather the essence of the problem was transport.[124]

The restrictions on transport for the Gallipoli campaign left the logisticians in a quandary as to how they were to move their supplies from the beach to the troops. The Deputy Assistant Director Ordnance Services, Lieutenant Colonel John Austin, recorded in his diary that once the troops had been landed:

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[122] Admin Staff HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, April 1916, AWM4, item 1/43/15.

[123] Maj Goddard (OC Aust Corps Troops Supply Column), 'Notes of Lecture to the School for Medical Officers', 17 January 1917, AWM27, item 305/9 part 1; and FOO, *The Making of a Gunner*, p 204.

[124] 1st Aust Div, 'Div Orders No 117', 23 April 1915, para 75, AWM: Gellibrand papers, 3DRL 1473, item 93.

> *The ammunition and supply ships also come up, and the ammunition is put ashore. My own particular job at first is to receive it and get it under some sort of cover. I have the spot marked out on the map, but whether it is actually suitable is another matter. The getting it up to the troops is another question. White, Chief of Staff, was very nice about it. " Get it to Austin, and he will get it up somehow." Just at present, however, how it is to be done Austin does not see. Of course wagons will not be available for some days, and so we are taking the mules of the mountain battery and have brought some donkeys. All the mail bags we can raise are impressed, and we shall sling the boxes into them. But first we shall have to lift them up to the Regimental reserve by hand labour—exciting work. I shall of course do as much as possible by night, so farewell sleep for many a long night.*[125]

Austin landed at the northern end of what was later known as Anzac Cove at about 9.15 am on 25 April and began establishing his first depot in conjunction with Jeremy Taylor Marsh (CO 1st Divisional Train AIF):

> *A day or 2 after as the Anzac Beach was rather congested, I got orders to establish a depot on Kaba* [Gaba] *Tepe Beach. It was an evil-looking place and I hated it from the first…. My first act was to build a nice high wall of clothing stores…. By the next morning we had all ashore nicely stacked, and M*[arsh]*. above had all his food nice and neat. Then they opened on us. The first shot killed 2 men and 15 mules. We stuck it out that day and dug ourselves in, but the 3rd day saw the end of it…. They fairly knocked us to blazes…. After that I reported to the General that it was folly to stay there, and so all that night…we loaded up and took a safer position a mile away. M*[arsh]*'s stores remained, because the General said he could quite well spare some of his cheese!*[126]

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[125] Lt Col J Austin (DADOS 1st Aust Div), diary entry, 21 April 1915, p 5, SLV: MS10705, item 3.

[126] Lt Col J Austin, diary entry, 6 May 1915, pp 22–24, SLV: MS10705, item 3.

Ammunition remained a problem both in quantity, types supplied and moving it. The 1st Division's 18-pounder guns deployed to Gallipoli with only 476 rounds per gun and all of this was shrapnel—the wrong kind needed to support the fighting on the Peninsula.[127] Even this small quantity tested the logistics system as the 1st Divisional Ammunition Column was returned to Egypt without landing and each shell had to be carried up the slopes to the guns.[128] Once the mules of the Indian Mule Cart Transport and the Zionist Mule Corps were landed this problem was eased.[129] Even so the effort of supplying the front-line never ceased as every night files of mules and men toiled up the ridges to take food, water and ammunition to the brigade dumps. At the brigade bases the different supply commodities were broken-up into unit lots and unit quartermasters brought work parties back to collect their entitlement.[130]

In addition to the problems of gun ammunition, the 1st Division also found itself at an extreme disadvantage without a supply of grenades, a commodity with which the Turks appeared to be liberally supplied. This was only remedied by improvising a bomb-making factory on the beach, which was established within the first week of the landings. Even so, the shortage of these items led to Lieutenant Uvedale Parry-Okeden, the OC of the Australian Divisional Ammunition Park, being placed in charge of all ammunition issues on the beach, with requisitions for bombs and grenades requiring HQ ANZAC

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[127] When the New Zealand howitzers landed they had only 176 rounds per gun. It was not until after the BEF had deployed to France in 1914 that the British Army began to investigate the need to provide the 18-pounder guns with a mix of shrapnel and high explosive (HE). This decision not to issue HE shells for the field guns had been made after extended pre-war trials and so it was not until October 1914 that the first 1000 18-pounder HE shells were shipped to France. At the end of June the ANZAC had only 1546 18-pounder shells left on the beach and all of this was shrapnel. Cunliffe Owen, 'Artillery at Anzac in the Gallipoli Campaign', p 538; Bidwell and Graham, *Fire-Power*, pp 96–98; and GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 30 June 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/4 part 2.

[128] Bdr L Gwyther (2nd BAC AIF), diary entry, 27 April 1915, SLV: MS11300, MSB401.

[129] Both these units were corps troops. The Zionist Mule Corps was formed in Egypt in 1914 and was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel JH Patterson. The unit had about 500 men and 750 mules and for the landings half of the unit was allocated to the 29th Division landing at Helles and the other half was landed at Anzac. Lt Col JH Patterson, DSO, *With the Zionists in Gallipoli*, Hutchinson, London, 1916, pp 32 and 35; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 281.

[130] Sgt L Gwyther (2nd BAC AIF), diary entry, 24–25 July 1915, SLV: MS11300, MSB401.

approval.[131] Complicating Parry-Okeden's task was wartime quality control with some ammunition types prone to malfunction and misfiring, causing weapons to jam or explode. In other cases he just didn't have enough ammunition.[132]

In mid-May, following the issue of the first two old model Japanese trench mortars, John Austin requested advice from Cyril Brudenell White on whether he could issue more mortar bombs to the 2nd Battalion. He explained that the division had only been issued a total of 120 rounds of which 36 had already gone to that battalion and now they were requesting another 36. White advised that the battalion could only have another 12 and any further demands for mortar bombs were to be sent to him for approval.[133]

Unlike the confusion over supply matters on Gallipoli, by the spring of 1916 when the 1st Division arrived in France, the BEF had largely overcome much of the initial improvisation and confusion surrounding its supply arrangements. While there were major problems still to be overcome and the infrastructure would require a major overall after the 1916 offensives, the system was more stable and established than the largely improvised affair the 1st Division had to cope with in the Mediterranean.

As noted previously most categories of supply for the BEF were shipped from Britain, there being little spare capacity in the French logistics system. The main British ports were Calais, Boulogne, Le Havre, Rouen and Dieppe. From these

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[131] Uvedale Parry-Okeden was an Australian-born, Citizen Forces officer when in 1914 he was appointed a lieutenant in the AIF and allotted to the 8th Company (AASC), which became the Divisional Ammunition Park (Motor Transport) of the 1st Australian Reserve Park. He served in Egypt and on Gallipoli where he was he was promoted captain and awarded the MC. Following the withdrawal he returned to Egypt and faced a GCM in February 1916 on two charges for drunkenness and using indecent language towards men under his command. He was found guilty on the first charges but not the second and although the court-martial recommended that he be reprimanded and loose seniority, GOC AIF (Alexander Godley at the time) directed that he be returned to Australia. In July 1917 he re-enlisted as a private, serving in Britain and rising to the rank of sergeant before returning to Australia in 1919. Michael D de C Collins Persse, 'Parry-Okeden, William Edward (1840–1926)', *ADB*, Vol 11, pp 147–148; NAA: B2455, file PARRY OKEDEN UVERDALE EDWARD; and Col WH Tunbridge, 'History of the Australian ASC Mechanical Transport Branch in the Great War 1914–1918', p 4, AWM224, MSS250.

[132] Lt Col J Austin (DADOS 1st Aust Div), diary entry, 6 May 1915, p 24, SLV MS10705, item 3; 1st Aust Div, Div Routine Orders No 146, 6 June 1915, AWM27, item 352/17; James, *Gallipoli*, pp 78–79; and 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 30 May 1915, AWM 4, item 23/18/1.

[133] Lt Col J Austin, minute to GSO1 1st Aust Div, 13 May 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/4, part 5.

ports the supplies were railed to 46 different railheads of which 12 were dedicated to ammunition. As the supplies came through different ports, the 1st Division's supply requirements (that is its standardised 'pack') were assembled at a regulatory station and then railed to its designated Railhead.[134]

The standardised divisional pack of daily consumables was a significant innovation for the BEF's logistics system. These packs contained all that an infantry division would require for a day—from food to fuel and even down to the divisional rum issue, which equated to about 100 gallons a day. In 1916 a daily pack included among other things:

> 15,000 bread rations; 15,000 rations of fresh meat; 5000 lb of bacon; 5000 lb of jam; 4070 lb of sugar; 4000 rations of preserved meat; 3750 lb of cheese; 3375 lb of biscuits; 840 lb of tea; 550 lb of salt; 77,000 lb of oats (for horses); 2240 lb of bran (for horses); one bale of latrine paper; 15,000 lb of coke; 12,500 lb of charcoal; 800 lb of chloride of lime (water purifier); 600 gallons of petrol; and 40 gallons of paraffin.

The standard pack was also varied according to the day of the week. On Mondays and Thursdays, tinned meat and vegetables were issued instead of preserved meat; preserved fruit was issued on Wednesdays instead of jam; while coke and charcoal were only issued when the division was in the line. In addition, there were less frequent deliveries.

Three times a week:	Twice a week:	Weekly:
62 gallons of limejuice.	2500 lb of butter; and 80 lb of mustard.	1250 lb of tobacco; 1250 lb of cigarettes; 1 sack of flour; and 1000 flypapers.

[134] Those assets shipped to France from Britain included new units, reinforcements, remounts and about two-thirds of the goods traffic, which amounted to perhaps 8500 tons per day. Colonel AM Henniker, *Transportation on the Western Front, 1914–1918*, HMSO, London, 1937, p 103.

The particular Railhead where the divisional pack was delivered depended on where the division was operating. The division could also expect to change its Railhead regularly as it moved into and out of the line or within the rear area. Indeed divisions from different corps might share a common Railhead. Even during the relatively static operations that characterised the front between 1916 and 1917, divisions changed their Railhead nearly every week and could usually expect about two days notice of a change.

For example during the Somme offensive of 1916, Reserve Army advised HQ I ANZAC and HQ 1st Division on 19 July that from 21 July their Railhead would be Acheux and the 4th Australian Division was to use Vignacourt. A week later (on 28 July), as the 1st Division was being relieved by the 2nd Australian Division, the 1st Division was advised that from the following day its Railhead would change to Vignacourt. At this time the 1st Division was to share the Railhead with the 15th (Scottish) Division, while the 4th Australian Division would be sharing Acheux with the 12th (Eastern) Division. A little over a week later (on 8 August), the 1st Division was back to Acheux and this time it was sharing with the 48th (South Midland) Division. Three weeks later the division left the Reserve Army for the Second Army and a completely new Railhead.[135]

ORDNANCE SERVICES

Warfare, especially industrialised warfare on the scale waged on the Western Front, is an inherently destructive and wasteful activity. To minimise the loss of and replacement of essential stores and equipment most armies attempt to undertake preventative maintenance to prolong the life of their equipment, they repair items that can be rendered serviceable again, or they modify it if it can be improved. They also attempt to salvage equipment and ammunition that has been abandoned on the battlefield, to be reused.

After the initial equipping of the 1st Division most of its replacement weapons, equipment and spare parts came through the British ordnance system. This

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[135] HQ Reserve Army, '"Q" Summary No 14', 19 July 1916; HQ Reserve Army, '"Q" Summary No 22', 28 July 1916; HQ Reserve Army, '"Q" Summary No 32', 8 August 1916; and HQ Reserve Army, '"Q" Summary No 48', 27 August 1916, PRO: WO95/523.

meant that the key Q staff officers had to understand the British ordnance and at least in the formative period of the division's service there was significant utility in having British officers acting as the point of contact with the ordnance services. Indeed it was fortuitous that John Austin was the division's first Deputy Assistant Director Ordnance Services.[136] On the eve of the landings he could take some satisfaction in recording that he had procured for the division two additional machine-guns and eight new 18-pounder guns:

> *…thanks to Hill's* [?] *kind officers. Tho' very busy himself he dug them out, together with clothing, etc which was badly wanted. The General* [Bridges] *was pleased when he heard of it, for the guns they gave us in Australia were very old—so up to the very last I have served them. Knowing the ropes, I have got stores which otherwise they might have gone without, and which will save many a*[n Australian] *life, also take many a* [Turkish] *life.*[137]

On the Western Front the dependence on the British ordnance services was absolute. When the 1st Division landed at Marseilles its artillery was despatched separately to the British ordnance depots at Le Havre where they were refitted and issued with their new light, medium and heavy trench mortars and 4.5-inch howitzers, and much of their worn-out heavy equipment was exchanged for newer items. Aside from this the 1st Division's very first indent on arriving in France included: 20,000 blankets, 8000 woollen vests, 8000 woollen drawers, 5000 cardigans, 40,000 gas-helmets, 21,000 anti-gas satchels, 20,000

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[136] John Austin was a British Army regular who in 1914 was serving on secondment as Australia's Director of Ordnance Services. Appointed a major in the AIF, he joined the 1st Division as DADOS and his contacts and charm smoothed the way at a time when the procedures for supply, maintenance and payment had as yet not been fully worked out. On Gallipoli he was appointed Assistant Director Ordnance Services ANZAC. He served on the Western Front with I ANZAC until mid-1917 when he returned to British service. Charles Bean characterised him as 'a strong, capable chap with the power of making everybody like him'. Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 78 fn10; JD Tilbrook, *To the Warrior His Arms: A History of the Ordnance Services in the Australian Army*, Royal Australian Army Ordnance Corps Committee, Canberra, 1989 pp 38–40 and 42; and NAA: B2455 series, file AUSTIN JG; and Bean, *Two Men I Knew*, p 97.

[137] Lt Col J Austin (DADOS 1st Aust Div), diary entry, 24 April 1915, p 7, SLV: MS10705, item 3.

anti-gas goggles, and 14,000 steel helmets. It was a symbiotic relationship that would last the war.[138]

Supply arrangements became more complicated as the BEF's weapons systems became more varied and complex and its battles increased in scale and sophistication. While fodder remained the bulkiest commodity shipped to France, ammunition was required in larger and larger quantities. For example, during its attack at Menin Road in September 1917 the 1st Division requisitioned 3,100,000 rounds of small arms ammunition, 36,000 Mills bombs, and 16,000 rifle grenades; but this total paled in comparison with the quantities of gun ammunition consumed.

By 1916 when the 1st Division arrived in France, the BEF's 'shell crisis' had largely been solved even if substantial improvements were still needed on the quality control of that ammunition. With industry producing ever-greater numbers of shells, ammunition available to the BEF grew exponentially. So a simple trench raid by a 1st Division battalion in 1916 would be supported by somewhere between 2500 and 5000 field gun rounds.[139] Later that same year during the operations around Pozières between 21 and 27 July, the artillery of the 1st Division fired nearly 73,000 rounds.[140] By June of the next year with the major British offensives at Messines and Ypres, each field gun and howitzer of the divisional artillery would fire more than 1000 rounds each in support of just one of the attacks in these great offensives. In the last year of the war, in the final 22 days before the Armistice, the BEF used a daily average of 4768 tons of ammunition, including 167,800 artillery and mortar rounds.[141]

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[138] AWM4, item 1/42/14, part 1; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 88 and 89–90.

[139] Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 251 fn14 and 255.

[140] In the period 20–27 July 1918 the division's 48 18-pounders and 12 4.5-inch howitzers fired 72,967 rounds, the majority of which were shrapnel, while only 17,440 18-pounder and 30 4.5-inch were HE. Admin Staff HQ 1st Aust Div, 'Expenditure of Gun Ammunition', nd, AWM4, item 1/43/18 appendix W; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, p 597 fn121.

[141] Miles, *BOH, 1918*, Vol IV, pp 181, 183–184, 213, 222 and 274.

Most Australian histories of the Great War focus on the horrors of trench warfare and the suffering of the digger. Precious few give any recognition to the success of the army's administrative arrangements. Aside from a noticeable lapse at Gallipoli, if a soldier fell sick or was wounded he generally received a high level of medical care and if he made it into the medical system he stood a very good chance of surviving. This same administrative system fed, clothed and bathed him. It also punished and rewarded him, paid him, sent him on regular leave and tended to his spiritual welfare. And the soldiers responded because in four-and-a-half bloody years, with 15,000 dead and another 35,000 wounded, the 1st Division suffered only one major incident where its men refused to fight. Even more telling is the fact that not one man in the 1st Division died of starvation, none of the division's soldiers were executed by the military, and of all its thousands of wartime fatalities, only 845 were from disease.[142]

The commanders and soldiers of the 1st Division might complain about British tactical performance but only on Gallipoli and on rare occasions on the Western Front does anyone speak ill of the logistic effort. Even during the heavy fighting at Pozières in July 1916 the division specifically noted that despite the heavy shelling, 'the arrangements for pushing forward supplies of ammunition, bombs, food and water were most thorough and there was no shortage or want at any time'.[143] During Third Ypres in October 1917, arguably the most trying period of the division's service on the Western Front, the war diarist observed of the Battle of Broodseinde, when the weather was fine: 'All administrative services and arrangements worked well, and the attacking troops were kept well supplied with rations, ammunition, water, and R[oyal] E[ngineer] materials.'[144] Although this was to dramatically change with the onset of rain, no general can control the elements and even under these conditions the division could still record: 'Continual wet weather making supplies of rations, ammunition, RE

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[142] One 1st Division soldier was executed by the British civil authorities in Britain for the murder of another AIF soldier. Peter Burness, 'Murder at Sutton Veny', *Wartime*, Issue 21, pp 60–62.

[143] Maj Gen HB Walker (GOC), 'Report on the Operations of the First Australian Division at Pozieres' to HQ I ANZAC, 3 August 1916, p 7, AWM4, item 1/42/18 part 2 appendix 19.

[144] Admin Staff HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 4 October 1917, AWM4, item 1/43/33.

material very difficult.'[145] Difficult but not impossible and due to the administrative arrangements the war could continue to be prosecuted until the Germans were defeated.

[145] Admin Staff HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 7 October 1917, AWM4, item 1/43/33.

CHAPTER 4

ALREADY HALF A SOLDIER: DIVISIONAL TRAINING

> *The training of the men was never the main difficulty in the Australian Imperial Force…. The Australian was half a soldier before the war.*

Charles Bean[1]

The Australian digger established an enviable reputation as a fighter during the Great War and at least according Charles Bean he was already half a soldier even before donning a uniform. This popularly held view has been reinforced by the claims of some veterans such as a Victorian country lad who observed:

> *Seeing I was brought up in Stawell, I could run…. I was a farmer and so I could shoot and because we had no bulldozers then we could make holes and excavate. If you could run, shoot and dig a hole you've got the makings of a good soldier.*[2]

While it is true that life in early twentieth century rural Australia was a tougher experience than today and many features of that life undoubtedly helped prepare the volunteers for their transition to military life, this did not make them soldiers. Aside from the fact that most 1st Division soldiers came from urban backgrounds, this same veteran also admitted that he and his mates did not receive enough training to prepare them for Gallipoli.[3] So where does the truth lie: were the 1st Division's men naturals requiring little to prepare them for war or did they require systematic training to prepare them for the shock of battle?

Just on the basis of time devoted to training, Bean's assertion of the half-made soldier must immediately be challenged. In four-and-a-half years the 1st

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[1] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, pp 46 and 47.

[2] James Bryant (8th Bn AIF), quoted in David Degnan and Brendan Hagstrom, *It may be for days, it may be forever: The story of five Wimmera Anzacs*, np, 1987, p 11.

[3] Ibid, p 18.

Division spent approximately one quarter of its service (374 days out of 1683) engaged in some form of training, only slightly less than the amount of time devoted to administration.[4] About one-quarter (totalling 103 days) of those training days were spent on individual training; this being the training of officers, non-commissioned officers (NCO) and soldiers in the personal skills required for their primary military duties. The other three-quarters (261 days) were devoted to collective training; this being the group or combined training of its sub-units, units and formations to ensure that their efforts could be coordinated on the battlefield. A small proportion was also spent on joint training with the Royal Navy and the Royal Flying Corps (10 days).

At unit level training was an even more time consuming task. A typical battalion spent nearly a third of its service (473 days out of 1673) engaged in some sort of training activity. Nearly one-fifth of this time (89 days) was devoted to individual training, such as individual foot drill, musketry, physical training, and specialist training; while more than four-fifths (384 days) was devoted to collective training, such as formation drill, field-firing, route-marching, tactical team drills, platoon, company, battalion, brigade and divisional manoeuvres, and joint training with the other services.[5] If for no other reason than the sheer quantity of time devoted to training, this activity deserves closer attention than it has received to date. This chapter will examine the type of training the 1st Division undertook during the war, analyse how that training changed during the course of the war and the doctrine on which it was based.

‘DRILL DRILL ALWAYS JOLLY WELL DRILLING’[6]

The training of the 1st Division’s soldiers before their departure from Australia was a planned if somewhat haphazard affair. From the outset the division’s GSO1, Cyril Brudenell White, was responsible for developing the divisional

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[4] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, August 1914–March 1919, War Diary, AWM4, 1/42/1–1/42/49.

[5] Based on an analysis of the 1st Battalion (AIF) daily activities and a selective comparison with the activities of the 5th and 9th Battalions. 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, AWM4, 23/18/1–23/18/42; 5th Bn (AIF), War Diary, AWM4, 23/22/1–23/22/50; and 9th Bn (AIF), War Diary, AWM4, 23/26/1–23/26/52.

[6] Gnr L Gwyther (2nd BAC AIF), diary entry, 28 October 1914, SLV: MS11300, MSB401.

training program, which he prepared at Bridges' direction. This program divided training into three stages: training to be undertaken before the division sailed, training on the voyage, and training after disembarkation. Although the program was distributed to all formations and efforts were made to adhere to White's plan, the mobilisation process meant that its application was at best uneven.[7]

While training began as soon as units were formed, efforts were plagued by chronic deficiencies. Equipment shortages, too few qualified instructors and inadequate training facilities caused delays and interrupted unit plans. It was also a slow process as many of the recruits lacked any prior military training. Initial training habitually began with foot drill, which in an era before the widespread motorisation of armies had a practical as well as a sociological purpose. Training then progressed to musketry and some rudimentary tactical training. The common complaint echoed in most soldier accounts of early training was the amount of time devoted to drill and indeed many of the officers and NCOs may have fallen back on drill as a useful time-filler to keep the troops occupied between more practical subjects, although others felt differently.[8]

Countering complaints over too much drill were the opinions of experienced COs such as 'Pompey' Elliott who felt that the root of discipline 'lies in the enforcement of every order, however trivial it may seem'. Charles Bean noted that Elliott 'placed in the old principles of drill and field tactics a simple faith which was very largely justified.'[9] From the formation of his battalion Elliott used drill as a means to socialise his raw recruits and introduce them to rudimentary discipline.[10] From the later disciplinary problems in Egypt it is clear that the 1st Division's problem may actually have been too little drill, rather than too much.

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[7] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 99.

[8] For examples of soldier attitudes to early training and its emphasis on drill see: Pte G Feist, letter, May 1915, quoted in Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p 44; and Gnr L Gwyther (2nd BAC AIF), diary entry, 18 December 1914, SLV: MS11300, MSB401.

[9] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 133.

[10] Elliott also used drill as the means of proving to his brigade commander that newly inducted soldiers could be made the equals of serving Citizen Forces soldiers within three weeks. At the end of his probationary period Elliott paraded his battalion and marched the soldiers past McCay who was impressed and accepted this as proof of their soldierly skills. Of course

The other commonly held belief is that the Australian soldier had some natural ability with firearms. This too does not hold up to scrutiny. After its first range shoot the 1st Battalion results of the 'grouping practice' 'were only moderate as [the] men were unacquainted with the Rifle.'[11] Early musketry training was also limited by access to ranges and at the major mobilisation centres in Sydney and Melbourne there was considerable congestion as whole brigades attempted to qualify soldiers on the musketry course.[12]

Access to facilities improved in Egypt as new ranges were built but ammunition restrictions continued to hinder live-fire training. The initial allocation of 50 rounds per 18-pounder, 2000 rounds for each machine-gun and 120 rounds per rifle for all training was progressively reduced to only 30 rounds per gun and 75 rounds for the other weapons, including the machine-guns.[13] This miniscule allocation was barley sufficient for the majority of the division's soldiers to complete the recruit musketry course and it meant that only about half of its soldiers were eventually classified as proficient shots.[14]

The training of the technical arms and services was even more complicated. For example, the engineers were hampered by a shortage of stores and they had to improvise most of their training, which focussed on the construction of field fortifications, road and bridge building and the use of water pumps. It was only made easier by the quality of their recruits as tradesmen, particularly plumbers and carpenters as well as skilled labourers, were most often attracted to the engineers and these men were found to make the best sappers since at this

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whether this was a true test of their soldierly capacity is debatable. McMullin, *Pompey Elliott*, p 85.

[11] 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 9 September 1914, AWM4, item 23/18/1.

[12] In Victoria the battalions of the 2nd Brigade had to be shuttled back and forth from their camp at Broadmeadows to the Williamstown Rifle Range. It took a week for the whole brigade to fire a single practice. Austin, *Our Dear Old Battalion*, p 18.

[13] The initial allocation was advised in early December and it was reduced in early January and then again in mid-January. 1st Aust Div, Div Orders No 8, 14 December 1914; Div Orders No 26, 8 January 1915; and Div Orders No 29, 12 January 1915. All on AWM27, item 352/19.

[14] In 1915 95 percent of the 1st Division had fired the recruit musketry course but only 51 percent were classified as 1st, 2nd or 3rd Class shots or marksmen. 'Summary of—Personnel Statistics', attached to 1st Aust Div, Div Orders No 43, 27 January 1915, AWM27, item 352/19.

time there was a relatively narrow skills differential between civilian construction workers and military engineers. It was more difficult for the gunners.[15]

For the field artillery the technical nature of gunnery training was compounded by the large range of skills that different soldiers required. Within the batteries, in addition to the gun numbers who worked the guns, there were 'almost an equal number trained as "specialists,"…telephonists, signallers, observers, plotters, Battery Commanders' assistants, linesmen, and, in the case of horsed batteries, drivers.'[16] All of these specialists were needed for the battery to move and operate effectively even before a single round could be fired. Little wonder that of the division's nine batteries only one—the 8th Battery (AIF)—appears to have fired a live practice before embarkation.[17]

Aside from the soldiers, the division's leaders also needed training. Although the majority of the officers had seen some previous service, many were not currently active and these officers had to be brought up to date on the changes that had occurred in doctrine and uniform standards established.[18] The task of training the large number of unqualified NCOs was even more difficult and recently appointed and provisional junior NCOs had to pass promotion exams before their appointments could be confirmed.

In essence, the effect of the decentralised mobilisation process, delays and shortages in equipping the force and the shortage of qualified instructors all retarded the best efforts of COs to train their units. Indeed the effectiveness of training before the division sailed must be rated as marginal and it would be hard to reject Jeffrey Grey's conclusion that 'the 1st Division was probably the worst-trained formation ever sent from Australian shores.'[19]

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[15] Ingle, *From Duntroon to the Dardanelles*, p 86.

[16] FOO, *The Making of a Gunner*, p 53.

[17] The 8th Battery fired 100 rounds, only 25 rounds per gun, at an improvised range near Perth. 'Brig-General Bessell-Browne on 8th Battery', AWM224, item MSS11.

[18] For an example of the type of Tactical Exercise Without Troops (TEWT) practised by company commanders and field rank officers of the 11th Battalion (AIF) see: 'Scheme A1', 'Scheme A2', 'Scheme B', 'Scheme C' nd. All on AWM27, item 304/49.

[19] Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, p 93.

In fairness to Bridges and his commanders it was always envisaged that the 1st Division would complete its training in Britain before going to France. So as the convoy arrived in Egypt and the disparate elements of the division were assembled at Mena Camp (this alone taking 12 days), training re-commenced.[20] Uncertain of how long he would have to prepare his division, Bridges was keen to make a start. In the division's second order, issued on 10 December, commanders of the formations and direct command units were instructed to submit their training programs to his headquarters within four days. Given that no decision had been made as to the immediate future of the division, an indicative time period was provided: one month for sub-unit (squadron, battery and company) training; ten days for unit (regimental and battalion) training; and ten days for formation (infantry brigades and divisional artillery) training; and this was to be followed by an undefined period for divisional work. Each formation was allocated an area around Mena and artillery and musketry field-firing areas were established on the recommendation of the formation commanders.[21] By any standard this was an ambitious program.[22]

Four days after Birdwood arrived in Egypt to take command of the ANZAC, he reported to Lord Kitchener that the training of the corps was backward and that the troops had not been drilled in:

> *… bayonet fighting, no digging, very little musketry…. Their artillery too is very indifferent* [but] *the material is excellent.*[23]

The corps artillery commander would also later recollect:

> *The Australian artillery…was practically untrained. No one had ever worked with a bigger unit than a battery or battalion, and co-*

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[20] 1st Aust Div, Div Orders No 1, 9 December 1914, AWM27, item 352/19.

[21] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 125; and 1st Aust Div, Div Orders No 2, 10 December 1914, AWM27, item 352/19.

[22] The New Army divisions were issued a training program based on six months. From raising to landing on Gallipoli the 1st Division had a total of eight months, which included a month to mobilise, and a month at sea.

[23] Lt Gen W Birdwood, letter to Lord Kitchener, 25 December 1915, PRO: Kitchener papers, 30/57/64 WL138.

> *operation between units was unknown…. Two or three officers had done some artillery work, but the bulk were quite new. Except for a little training in Australia and Egypt, all the knowledge they had was from drill books and from what they had seen in Egypt…. Practice camps were started after I had got some ammunition, with some difficulty. Very few officers had ever shot a battery. The actual drill, and seeing where the shells burst, were good, but few knew what effective shrapnel ought to be*.[24]

The training program Bridges launched was by the standards of the day arduous and the soldiers in general threw themselves into it. Training lasted for at least eight hours a day (often more) every day except Sundays.[25]

Company and battery training was supposed to last until January 1915 but on New Year's Day the infantry battalions adopted the four-company organisation and on the following day began training on the anew. The battalions buckled down to training even if they were beginning from a very low point as one regular officer noted in mid-January: 'Our infantry are our weakest point in the division.'[26] Despite this, training progressed quickly with battalion and brigade training being rushed through in just twenty days, leaving the rest of the time available for skirmishing, which it was assumed would dominate operations on Gallipoli.

Early February saw the culmination of formation training with a series of deployments out into the desert followed by a tactical exercise that sometimes lasted several days. After one 24-hour exercise involving the 2nd Brigade, a junior officer noted that it was the hardest 24 hours he had ever done: 'Route march, attack, entrenching, outpost, return march.'[27] By late March the same

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[24] Cunliffe Owen, 'Artillery at Anzac in the Gallipoli Campaign', pp 536–537.

[25] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 125.

[26] Lt W Dawkins (2nd Fd Coy AIF), letter to brother, 11 January 1915, quoted in Ingle, *From Duntroon to the Dardanelles*, p 117.

[27] Capt L Morshead (2nd Bn AIF), diary entry, 9 February 1915, AWM: Morshead papers, 3DRL 2632, item 3/1.

officer who had been so critical of the infantry just six weeks earlier would modify his opinion:

> *The training they have done here is absolutely strenuous as it could possibly be. The limit of what the men can do has been reached and under most adverse circumstances always marching in from 6" to 12" of sand and digging-in in difficult rocky country. The force physically is in the peak of condition and Australia never has, nor will turn out a fighting force to equal this 1st Division.*[28]

Indeed the units appeared to be making such progress that Bridges was encouraged to reduce the working hours.[29]

Training culminated in a series of divisional schemes with Bridges manoeuvring his brigades in accordance with plans developed by Headquarters (HQ) ANZAC. These training days were designed to practice the full range of divisional combat and service capabilities and the HQ reported favourably on the standard achieved. The GSO3, Major Thomas Blamey, noted in the War Diary how the: 'Men worked very well—generally speaking an instructive day; work at Div HQ proceeded smoothly, 1st Inf Bde covering troops well disposed, attack well carried out…[30] As for the artillery, Birdwood still had concerns writing in early February: 'I find that 80 per cent of my Australian artillery and 50 per cent of the NZ artillery have never yet seen a gun fired, so you can realise how far down one has had to begin with them.'[31] Over the three months the gunners worked hard and progress was rapid, although it remained at an elementary level.

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[28] Lt W Dawkins (2nd Fd Coy AIF), letter to Mrs White (family friend), 24 March 1915, quoted in Ingle, *From Duntroon to the Dardanelles*, p 140.

[29] In January work was reduced to 40 hours per week with a one-day holiday. In addition, Sunday was observed as a rest day except for church parades and the usual camp duties. 1st Aust Div, Div Orders No 47, 26 January 1915, AWM: Gellibrand papers, 3DRL 1473, item 93.

[30] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 1 April 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/3 part 1.

[31] Lt Gen W Birdwood, letter to Lt Col O Fitzgerald (Secretary to Lord Kitchener), 2 February 1915, quoted in Horner, *The Gunners*, p 85.

Not only were the batteries put through their paces but during the larger field exercises the sections of the Divisional Ammunition Column were also worked to ensure that they could keep the guns and infantry supplied with ammunition.[32] Unfortunately the shortage of 'live' ammunition for training purposes meant that much of the Column's work was notional and as a result the field days lacked realism. So while the ANZAC commanders were able to make their training hard in a physical sense, what they could rarely achieve, given the general shortage of material and especially ammunition, was the opportunity to make training realistic. Some form of battle inoculation training could have introduced those non-veteran officers and soldiers to the confusion, noise and sights of battle. Certainly some field firing was conducted but little attempt seems to have been made to run these activities under simulated combat conditions. It was simply peacetime training, only harder.[33]

By March, Bridges was aware that his division was to be committed to Gallipoli. This operation, the division's baptism of fire, was to be an amphibious assault upon a defended shore—probably the most complex of all military operations. Today this type of operation is normally allocated to permanently organised bodies of specialists who are trained and equipped just for such a task. This was not well appreciated in 1915 and in any case Bridges just had to make do with what he had.[34]

Despite the short timeframe Bridges and his commanders did what they could to prepare for the landings. When the ships carrying the 1st Division arrived at Mudros, disembarkation and embarkation drills were practiced both by day and night. Unfortunately poor weather precluded training on several days however,

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[32] Lt Col OA Tunbridge (CO), 1st DAC Orders 101, 107 and 117, 14 and 20 February and 4 March 1915, AWM25, file 707/10 part 168.

[33] Godley at least ensured that the leadership of his units had done some attacks with live ammunition and over a three day period (30 March–1 April 1915) the officers and NCOs of the 4th Brigade (AIF), part of his NZ&A Division, carried out instructional attacks using blank ammunition and then ball ammunition. NZEF, War Diary, 30 March–1 April 1914, PRO: WO95/4280.

[34] For the needs of amphibious training see: Julian Thompson, *No Picnic. 3 Commando Brigade in the South Atlantic: 1982*, Guild Publishing, London, 1985, pp 31–53.

there were at least some attempts to conduct 'dress rehearsals' with the 3rd Brigade, which was selected as the covering force for the landings. [35]

TRAINING ON GALLIPOLI

The many limitations of the 1st Division's early training were quickly and cruelly exposed on Gallipoli. The rushed mobilisation, the unrealistic if hard training regime in Egypt and its cursory amphibious training left the division with a thin veneer of experience that did not hold up under the strain of combat. As shall be explored in the next chapter, the inadequacy of the division's training left it exposed to near collapse within a few days of its first great test.

The failure to achieve a quick victory following the landings exacerbated the initial training problems because heavy casualties meant that units required rapid reinforcement. The haste with which the Gallipoli operation was conceived and launched meant that nothing but the most cursory thought had been given to developing a training base for the forces committed to the operation. Hence the training of reinforcements, whether fresh volunteers or returning veterans who had been evacuated, remained a problem until the end of the campaign.

Furthermore, Gallipoli presented peculiar problems for training. The absence of quiet sectors along the line precluded a 'nursery' where new troops could gradually be familiarised with trench routine and the shallowness of the enclave meant that there was no real rear area where units could be rested and trained while they absorbed their reinforcements. Instead, new troops were often quickly 'told-off' to their units and thrust into the line almost as they disembarked. These limitations meant that it was crucial for all reinforcements to be well trained but sadly in most cases the opposite proved true.

From early in the campaign 1st Division officers were commenting on the poor standards of training and discipline of their reinforcements. When CO 'Pompey'

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[35] A British officer attached to HMS *Queen Elizabeth* for special duty during the landings noted in his recollections that embarkation drills were practiced by day and night, while a 5th Battalion corporal observed that on the 15, 16 and 17 April his unit prepared for disembarkation training although it was cancelled on each day. Capt CG Dix, "'Anzac': Impressions of the Landing and 14 weeks work on the Beach', p 7, AWM25, item 367/5; and Cpl H Molony (5th Bn AIF), diary entries, 15–17 April 1915. SLV: MS10984, MSB359.

Elliott returned to the Peninsula in June he observed that the 'new men we are getting are hardly trained at all'.[36] It was the same in other battalions as one 5th Battalion NCO noted:

> *Jim Borroman & Arthur Tully & 2 from Hospital & 11 Reinforcements to hand. Latter just about the same slip-shod crowd…. New arrivals made a very bad start by not obeying previous night's orders & taking a hell of a time to turn out.*[37]

Many of these reinforcements arrived even unable to effectively use a rifle.[38] While Birdwood was at fault for urging the early movement of every available reinforcement, Bridges must also share some of the blame for failing to support Victor Sellheim who struggled to establish the Australian Base Depot at Alexandria with little support from his chief. Meanwhile the division attempted to remedy the most obvious faults with their new men.[39]

To improve the weapon handling and shooting a miniature rifle range was established on Reinforcement Green, 500 metres behind the line. Unfortunately some of these soldiers proved to be as great a risk to their comrades as to the enemy, as one officer recalled:

> *Many of these men had not even been taught to load, let alone fire their rifles, consequently they had to be instructed….in aiming and rapid loading. No dummy cartridges were available; the loading practices being carried out with chargers of live rounds and many were the unintentional explosions. Lieut. B.V. Stacey, later colonel of the 1st Battalion, one day acting as instructor, narrowly missed a*

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[36] Lt Col H Elliott (CO 7th Bn AIF), letter to wife, 28 June 1915, AWM: 2DRL0513.

[37] CQMS H Molony (5th Bn AIF), diary entries, 17–18 June 1915, SLV: MS 10984, MSB359.

[38] Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, p 411; and Wren, *Randwick to Hargicourt*, pp 88–89.

[39] Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, p 412; and Lt Gen WR Birdwood (GOC), HQ ANZAC Memorandum No 4075 to HQ MEF, 1 April 1915, AWM4, item 1/25/1 part 4 appendix 1 (a).

> *premature end to his career when one of the loading party sent a bullet whistling past his ear.*[40]

The other challenge the 1st Division faced was the introduction of new weapons. Almost as soon as the division landed it was shocked at the Turkish superiority in grenades, a weapon that few Australians had even seen before then. Grenades were at this stage of the war not widely available in the British Army and were still regarded as a specialist engineer munition. On the Peninsula however, it quickly became a weapon of choice, and while improvised 'jam-tin' bombs could be hastily manufactured on the beach, training troops in the safe employment of these was another matter.[41]

All weapons are 'doubled-edged' and grenades particularly so, since their careless use can do as much harm to the user as they can the enemy. This was especially the case at Anzac where there was a lack of quality control in the manufacture of the bombs and limited production meant that they remained a scare item for many weeks. Even three months after the landings not all troops had been taught how to use them. A member of the 3rd Battalion (AIF) during the August offensive recalled later how his men had to learn 'on-the-job':

> *Up to this time we had had no experience with bombs, by reason of the fact that when the Third settled down after the Landing they found themselves in a sector—Johnston's Jolly—that was a hundred yards or more from the nearest Turk trench. The result was that the bombs were disposed of on that morning with a fair amount of misguided enthusiasm, and more than one man lost a limb or was blown to bits as he argued with the man next him how best to throw it, and how long to hold it after it had been lighted.* [42]

It took time to sort out these issues and for matters to improve.

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[40] Brig Gen I Mackay, '"Furphies": Anzac News', *Reveille*, Vol 4, No 6 (31 March 1931) p 42.

[41] Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, pp 95 and 412–413.

[42] Maj P Goldenstedt, 'Attack and Defence: 3rd at the Pine', *Reveille*, Vol 5, No 11 (1 August 1932) p 26.

In November one battalion noted approvingly how their new reinforcements 'had done 13 weeks training and fired their musketry course.'[43] Much of the credit for this improvement must go to Major General James Spens, the British regular officer who commanded Cairo Military District. Spens was responsible for the establishment of what became the ANZAC Training Depot. This depot grew out of the improvised collection of reinforcement holding units that was formed in April but Spens, with the agreement of Birdwood, formalised the system by grouping the Australian infantry reinforcement drafts into provisional battalions.[44]

Back in September, when the number of these provisional battalions had increased to seven, Spens established a system by which each of the brigades of the AIF then at the front was represented by a battalion at the depot. Initially British regulars staffed these battalions as Spens had difficulty in obtaining efficient Australians. As Charles Bean notes, 'the Australian brigades as yet hardly knew of the existence of their training units' and it would take some time before they learned the dangers of not providing quality training staff. Spens noted with justifiable frustration that the staff sent to him from Gallipoli were 'certainly not selected for efficiency' while those who were sent to him from hospital were usually urgently wanted by their COs on the Peninsula.[45]

Unfortunately Spens' efforts took time to mature and it was not until after the August offensive that things really began to improve. Up until then it was often a case of ill-prepared men being sent to premature deaths, as Cyril Brudenell White would later lament:

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[43] 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 3 November 1915, AWM 4, item 23/18/6.

[44] Kitchener gave the original authority for this with the acquiescence of Bridges. Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, p 145.

[45] The GOC in Egypt, John Maxwell, was well aware of the importance of Spens' work when he wrote to the governor-general noting that: 'I have…in General Spens a man who appeals to the Australians, and who takes the greatest interest and care in their training, whilst under him is an officers' training school, which is very practical, and is producing first-rate results.' Maj Gen JG Maxwell (GOC Egypt) letter to Munro Ferguson, 31 October 1915, NLA: Novar papers, Box 5, item 3591; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, p 162.

> *…no recollection is more bitter than the complaints of the men themselves that they had had not sufficient training to give them a fair chance. That complaint was made to me bitterly before the battle of Lone Pine, and, in such few hours that remained to us efforts were made to remedy the deficiency. But time was not available, and the need of the men was great, and ever, in consequence, rests upon our consciences a deep sense of the responsibility incurred.*[46]

Fortunately later in the campaign there was less pressure to rush reinforcements into the line and units could take more care in assimilating them.[47]

PREPARING THE NEW DIVISION

When the 1st Division was withdrawn from Gallipoli it initially assembled on Lemnos where the new MEF commander, General Sir Charles Monro, decided that the climate was unsuitable and 'Egypt was the only place where they [the Anzacs] could be properly re-fitted, rested, and reorganised.'[48] Learning from their previous mistake of placing the troops too close to the distractions of Cairo, the 1st Division was assembled at Tel-el-Kebir, about 110 kilometres northeast of Cairo on the delta fringe. The desert in this area was undulating and hard-surfaced and much better for training.

Aside from the decision to move the ANZAC to Egypt, Monro was able to provide little guidance on their training.[49] What was clear was that the ANZAC would require some time if it was to effectively absorb its reinforcements and

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[46] CCB White, 'Some Recollections of the Great War', 1 April 1921, AWM: White papers, 3DRL 6549.

[47] When the 1st Battalion (AIF) received a large reinforcement in the afternoon of 3 November, the reinforcements were held behind the line and allocated to the companies but not until the following day in the early afternoon, when they had had the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the area and orientate to their new surroundings were they actually posted to their companies. 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 3 and 4 November 1915, AWM 4, item 23/18/6.

[48] Quoted in Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, p 3.

[49] Maj Gen A Lynden Bell (CGS MEF), copy of letter to GOC ANZAC, 20 January 1916, AWM27, item 304/9.

train before being transferred to France. This challenge was an enormous one. In a superficial way the 1st Division was now a battle-hardened formation with a wealth of combat experienced officers and men. This experience however, had been bought at a high cost and all of the battle-proven units had suffered a large loss of personnel even before they were split to provide a cadre for new AIF units. Additionally, those troops remaining had seen many of their basic skills eroded.

Despite the common perception that battle improves a soldier's skills, the reality is that exposure to operations might turn the individual into a veteran however the longer he remains in combat the more his skills degrade. Not only did the digger's physical fitness decline on a monotonous diet but also their basic skills such as shooting also fell-away and all ranks required re-fresher training to re-hone those skills. Gallipoli also proved something of a false start, giving the division a superficial veneer of experience; however, the types of operations practiced on the Peninsula were significantly different from those it would face in France.

On Gallipoli the 1st Division had operated in a small enclave with considerable autonomy. Despite the publicity surrounding the operations at Anzac, these were essentially low-level and rarely did the formations have an opportunity to practice their collective skills. Most of the day-to-day operations offered little scope to test the brigades and supporting arms except briefly at the landings, during the August offensive and during the withdrawal. Most importantly artillery operations had been conducted on a battery basis although more often than not most 'shoots' only involved coordinating pairs or even single guns. This was the antithesis of what was developing in France and these deficiencies could only be overcome by a significant period of thorough and uninterrupted training.

The problem facing Godley, as the acting ANZAC commander, was that he did not know how long he had to prepare his divisions. The initial training program, designed by himself, Brudenell White and the ANZAC staff, was rudimentary and it was scheduled to last just three weeks since it was not clear when the ANZAC would be called upon to move to France. Resources also limited it with only 50 rounds per soldier being allocated for musketry training. The artillery

was directed to concentrate on battery training, emphasising individual training of the soldiers and the newly promoted officers and NCOs. On a more positive note Godley insisted that training focus on night operations to accustom the men to work in darkness and this would prove fortuitous just a few months later at Pozières.[50]

As well as retraining the veterans, the depleted ANZAC was brought up to strength absorbing some 35,000 reinforcements. For managing these often-unruly newcomers, each infantry brigade had its training battalion but there were still problems with the nascent training system. The lack of a permanent Establishment meant that manning and equipment was still in a state of flux and the demands of the newly raised AIF units came at the expense of the training organisation, which once again had to make do with whoever and whatever was left over. In essence Spens cobbled together two training brigades based on provisional Establishments although in many cases the shortage of staff meant that the training battalions were commanded by subalterns—hardly a satisfactory state of affairs. For the training of the artillery reinforcements Spens established a combined ANZAC organisation with the Australians providing a four-gun battery and the New Zealanders a two-gun section.[51]

The structure for each of these training organisations was eventually agreed and notwithstanding their limitations they did help prepare the raw reinforcements before they were drafted to their units. They also became the foundation for a permanent, dedicated divisional training support organisation. These organisations were subsequently transferred to Britain after the departure of the infantry divisions for France. In Britain they became part of the

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[50] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, GS Memorandum No 1, 8 January 1916, AWM27, item, 304/8; Maj RB Smythe (GSO2), GS HQ I ANZAC memorandum 'Training', 4 March 1916, AWM4, item 1/29/1 appendix 2; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, p 13.

[51] Maj RB Smythe (GSO2), GS HQ I ANZAC memorandum 'Training', 4 March 1916, AWM4, item 1/29/1 appendix 2; Maj Gen J Spens (GOC), GS Cairo District Memorandum 3113/AQ to HQ ANZAC, 2 March 1916, AWM27, item 304/12; Brig Gen CBB White (BGGS), HQ ANZAC GS Circular No 6 'Organisation of Training Units', 10 January 1916, AWM27, item 304/12; Maj Gen J Spens, GS Cairo District Memorandum 1571/G to GOC ANZAC, 15 January 1916, AWM22, item 123/14/20; and Maj Gen J Spens, GS Cairo District Memorandum 3113/AQ to HQ ANZAC, 2 March 1916, AWM27, item 304/12; and Maj Gen J Spens, GS Cairo District Memorandum 1571/G 'The Training, Reinforcements A&NZ Army Corps' to GOC ANZAC, 9 January 1916, AWM27, item 304/12.

AIF training depots that were established on Salisbury Plain and for the rest of the war they played a vital role in sustaining the 1st Division.[52]

Following the withdrawal, the 1st Division also came 'within range of the great system of training-schools, which was...beginning to play a recognised part in the maintenance of all British armies.'[53] While the 1st Division was expected to organise its own schools at battalion, brigade and divisional level, HQ MEF and Maxwell's Egyptian HQ also ran 'higher' schools for the training of instructors. Officers and NCOs received instruction at the MEF School at Ismailia or at the Imperial School of Instruction at Zeitoun and in all about 1000 Australians were trained at these establishments.

Given the enormity of the reorganisation the 1st Division faced in Egypt, there should be little surprise that its training efforts were not a complete success. One of the inevitable by-products of the haste with which the reconstitution and expansion was carried out was that a large number of poorly trained and untrainable soldiers had to be managed by the training system. After the departure of the 1st Division, one battalion requested the withdrawal of 85 of its soldiers, nearly ten percent of its strength, because the CO felt: 'these men…are very backward in their training and although they have been given extra instruction here they make no progress and retard the progress of the remainder of the Battalion.' Although this was not a 1st Division battalion some of the men had been 'left behind from the 7th and 8th Battalions, and it is pretty evident that they were left behind because of their inefficiency.'[54]

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF INDIVIDUAL TRAINING

After the move to the Western Front the training of reinforcements continued to improve. Under direction of the War Office, standardised training programs were implemented and the 1st Division took a much closer interest in its training

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[52] 'Proposed Establishments of Permanent Cadres of Training Brigades Battalions and Companies', nd; 'A Training Battalion (AIF and NZ)', nd; and 'A Training Battery AFA', nd. All held on AWM27, item 304/12.

[53] Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, p 13.

[54] CO 14th Bn (AIF), Memorandum to HQ 4th Inf Bde (AIF), 21 April 1916, AWM27, item 304/47.

organisation. Unlike the ignorance and apathy that marked the earlier relationship between units in the field and their training organisations, by 1916 every effort was being made by the division to provide high-quality staff to man the training establishments in Britain.

The redoubtable Harold Walker, who returned to command the division following the withdrawal, was the key to this. Even before the war Walker had served as the second-in-command of a mounted infantry school in Ireland and later had distinguished himself as a battalion commander in India, as one of his officers recalled:

> *Colonel Walker was one of those 'milestones', which crop up from time to time in the history of most Regiments'. He was an outstanding soldier, who brought his Battalion to the highest state of efficiency … Colonel Walker was a wonderful trainer of troops. His exercises were well thought out and instructive. His criticisms concise and to the point. There was no time for boredom. He never fussed, but kept his Battalion on the tip of its shoes, eager, and active …* [and] *when he left Wellington I doubt if there was a better-found battalion in the British army. He was the ideal Commanding Officer, one whose steely eye and incisive manner caused him to be feared, yet deeply respected.*[55]

Walker carried his interest in training with him from his time in Egypt before the landings through to his assumption of command of the division. During his tenure on the Western Front he kept in regular contact with the Britain-based training establishments, receiving bi-monthly reports from the CO. Walker and his subordinates were also frequent visitors and in one two-week period in late 1917 the 1st Training Brigade was visited by two of the division's brigade commanders, two brigade majors and four COs.[56]

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[55] Brig Gen G Hyde-Harrison, DSO, quoted in Ralph May, Stuart Eastwood and Clive Elderton, *Glory is No Compensation: The Border Regiment at Gallipoli, 1915*, Silver Link Publishing, Kettering, 2003, pp 12 and 24.

[56] Lt Col E Hilmer-Smith (CO No 1 Group, AIF Training Centre), letter to Maj Gen HB Walker (GOC 1st Aust Div), 15 July 1917; Lt Col E Hilmer-Smith, letter to Maj Gen HB Walker, 24

By mid-1917 the syllabus for all British and dominion infantry reinforcements was refined and comprehensive, running to a total of 14 weeks. This training included musketry, a gas test, medical and clothing checks, a three-day Lewis gun course, instruction in signalling and rifle grenades, and all soldiers had to throw two live bombs. When a soldier met all of these mandatory requirements he was deemed fully trained and his pay book was endorsed. Only then could he be drafted to France. However, while infantrymen made up the bulk of the division, there were thousands of other military specialists who also had to be trained.[57]

Each of the corps specialisations of the AIF maintained a separate training depot in Britain. Most of these were established in May 1916 as the infantry divisions were transferring to France. Artillery reinforcements were trained at the AIF Artillery Training Depot at Larkhill, which later became the Reserve Brigade Australian Artillery. The field engineers and signallers were trained at the Engineer Training Depot at Brightlingsea. The Australian Machine-Gun Training Depot at Grantham trained machine-gun corps officers and NCOs. The Australian Army Service Corps training depot trained all service corps reinforcements; while the Australian Army Medical Corps Training Depot at Parkhouse maintained a 40-bed clearing hospital where it trained men for the field ambulances.[58]

August 1917; Lt Col E Hilmer-Smith (CO 1st Training Bde), letter to Maj Gen HB Walker, 10 November 1917; and Lt Col J Walstab (CO 2nd Training Bn), letter to GOC 2nd Inf Bde (AIF), 4 April 1917. All held on AWM27, item 303/1.

[57] This training brought recruit training into line with the requirements of the new doctrine in *Instruction for the Training of Platoons for Offensive Action (SS143)*. For the syllabus and tests see Army Council, *Army Council Instructions: August 1917*, HMSO, London, 6 August 1917, No 1230, pp 11–13.

[58] AAQMG, HQ 4th Aust Div Memorandum to CDA, 7 May 1916, AWM27, item 303/90; AAG AIF, HQ I ANZAC Memorandum to HQ AIF Depots UK, 3 December 1916, AWM27, item 303/77; *AIFO*: 437a, 1 January 1917; DAG AIF, HQ AIF UK 'Establishments—AIF Depots in UK—Reserve Brigade Australian Artillery', 15 September 1917, AWM27, item 303/36; *AIFO*: 437a, 1 January 1917; CAAQMG, HQ 4th Aust Div Memorandum to CDE, 7 May 1916, AWM27, item 303/90; *AIFO*: 437a, 1 January 1917; DAG AIF, Memorandum CR AIF 17638A Appendix A 'Establishment Australian Machine Gun Training Battalion', AWM27, item 303/139; AAQMG, HQ 4th AS Div Memorandum to OC 4th Div Train (AIF), 7 May 1916, AWM27, item 303/90; and Director General Australian Army Medical Services, Department of Defence letter No 100538 to military district commandants, 23 November 1916, AWM27, item 303/299.

In mid-1917 most of the corps training depots were reduced and restructured because of the recruiting crisis and the need to rationalise manpower. While instructional staffs were reduced, most staff for these schools continued to be provided on a six-monthly basis from the divisions in France, although some technical staff still came from the British Army.[59]

Complementing the reinforcement training depots was a separate system known as the Command Depots. These depots were established to prepare veterans who were recovering from wounds or illness and were either to be sent back to the trenches or repatriated. Within this system different depots handled soldiers at various stages of recovery. The final stage saw fit returnees sent to the Overseas Training Brigade. Initially this brigade maintained a battalion for each of the five Australian infantry divisions but in late 1917 it too was reduced to three battalions, of which the 1st Battalion trained returnees for the 1st Division and wherever possible this battalion was staffed from the division.[60]

After their training was complete in Britain, the reinforcements were certified ready, grouped into drafts and shipped to France. All reinforcements, new and veteran, had then to undergo a further period of training and testing at the in-theatre base depot. For infantrymen this usually took about ten days before they were forwarded to their unit. Initially the Australian Infantry Base Depot was located at Etaples and although quartered at their respective divisional camps the troops were daily trained at the infamous training ground known as the 'bull-ring'. In 1917 Etaples was the scene a major disturbance as British, dominion and colonial troops rioted over conditions. One of the outcomes of the 'mutiny' were changes to the training regime and efforts were made to segregate the

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[59] DAG AIF, HQ AIF UK 'Establishments—AIF Depots in UK—Reserve Brigade Australian Artillery', 15 September 1917, AWM27, item 303/36; Maj Gen JW McCay (GOC AIF Depots), Memorandum CR AIF 15126 (A) to DAG AIF, 16 August 1917, AWM27, item 303/36; Lt Col JS Knox (AAG AIF UK Depots), Memorandum to OC Aust Engineer Training Depot, 16 July 1917, AWM27, item 303/1; Maj Gen JW McCay, Memorandum CR AIF 17638(A) 'Aust Machine Gun Training Battalion: Grantham' to DAG AIF, 3 August 1917, AWM27, item 303/231; and Maj Gen JW McCay, Memorandum to Maj EJ Sexton (Commandant Aust MG Training Depot), 3 August 1917, AWM27, item 303/231.

[60] Commandant AIF Admin HQ (London), AIF Admin HQ memorandum to HQ I ANZAC, 21 June 1916, AWM27, item 302/40; and Maj Gen JW McCay (GOC AIF Depots), letter to Maj Gen HB Walker (GOC 1st Aust Div), 28 October 1917, AWM27, item 303/1.

contingents. In June 1917 the Australian depot moved to Harfleur, near Le Havre.[61]

The dissatisfaction with the base depot system led to further changes in late 1917. In November the Infantry Base Depot at Le Harfleur became the Corps Reinforcement Camp. The new I ANZAC Reinforcement Camp consisted of a corps depot ('X' Camp) and a number of divisional wings with the 1st Division's Wing being 'A' Camp. The divisional wing was responsible for receiving, maintaining and training its division's reinforcements and the camp's staff were drawn from the division, with the instructional staff normally attached on a two-month rotation. The divisional wings appeared to have worked well and they survived well into the following year, only being disbanded after the Armistice.[62]

While the mature training system provided the 1st Division with better prepared reinforcements, it also came with significant overheads. All of the training organisations supplying reinforcements to the division were staffed with personnel from the division. This relied on cycling appropriate personnel through the school staffs and keeping those who proved competent instructors for as long as they could be released from their unit. This led to constant pressure on front-line commanders to provide quality staff for instructional duties, while understandably the COs were reluctant to release their best men when they were needed at the front. In turn, COs of the training organisations, most of whom had been recent front-line commanders, were also under constant pressure to return proven instructors to their units.[63]

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[61] The 'bull-ring' received its unflattering nickname from the troops who felt that while they were training they were being led around by the nose like prize bulls. Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 177–179.

[62] BGGS, HQ Aust Corps Memorandum 188/2188, 18 November 1918, AWM27, item 302/69, Part 2.

[63] Lieutenant Colonel Ernest Hillier Smith (also spelled Hilmer-Smith) is a good example of the officers who later commanded the division's training establishments. Smith was an Australian-born, pre-war Citizen Forces officer who joined the AIF as a captain in 1914. After service on Gallipoli he was appointed a CB and invalided back to Australia for convalescence. After making a full recovery he saw further service on the Western Front as CO 11th Battalion (AIF) before commanding the 1st Division Training School and the 1st Training Group in Britain. Failing health led to his repatriation in 1918. Belford, *Legs-Eleven*, pp 347, 357, 358, 367, 388, 392, 400, 409, 415 and 416; Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 276 fn57, and Vol II, pp 473–475; Maj RB Smythe (GSO2 1st Aust Div), 'First Australian Division School. Tirancourt', nd, AWM4, 1/42/27 part 2 appendix XV; and NAA: B2455, file SMITH EH.

Compounding these difficulties was the problem of ensuring the instructional staff was actually qualified for their duties. For example, if a training group in Britain required an instructor for physical training and bayonet fighting but the NCO identified to fill the appointment was not qualified, he had to be sent off for training. In the case of physical training and bayonet fighting this required attendance at two separate courses at Tidworth and Aldershot. On return to the training group the novice instructor then had to instruct for one month on probation and only if deemed satisfactory would he be certified. This process took about three months and so the training group CO was obviously keen to keep such a man for as long as possible to get the best value out of his qualifications; in the meantime the soldier's CO in France was equally impatient to get him back.[64] Of course these challenges not only plagued the training of reinforcements, they were the same for the broader problem of finding and training the host of NCOs every divisional unit needed to function effectively.[65]

Most of the 1st Division's original NCOs were drawn from the part- and full-time Australian forces or were ex-Imperials. These men relied on whatever pre-war training and experience they had and for those without formal training it was a matter of learning on-the-job. This extemporised system could barely meet the demands of Gallipoli, when following the withdrawal a whole new cadre of NCOs had to be found to replace casualties and to fill the positions left vacant by the transfer of veterans to the newly created units of the expanded AIF. As such, in March 1916 potential NCOs for the 7th Battalion sat promotion exams supervised personally by the CO, however something more was needed. It was only in February 1916 that the Army Council directed every command in the British Army to establish an NCO school. The first courses conducted by these

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[64] Lt Col E Hilmer-Smith (CO No 1 Group, AIF Training Centre), letter to Maj Gen HB Walker (GOC 1st Aust Div), 15 July 1917, AWM27, item 303/1.

[65] In 1914 NCOs made up less than one in five of the 1st Division's authorised Establishment. Following the 1915 reorganisation of the infantry battalions each unit had an Establishment of six warrant officers and 46 staff and other sergeants. This proportion remained fairly consistent throughout the war and in 1917 a battalion maintained an Establishment for 136 NCOs, although this was deemed insufficient for unit needs, which was estimated at 180. The shortfall however, could be made up by the CO who could appoint additional unpaid lance corporals. Thus about 18 percent (or nearly one in five) of battalion's manpower were NCOs. AIF, *Tables*, 1914, passim; and *Notes for Commanding Officers (5th Course)*, 1917, pp 302–303.

schools lasted three weeks but they were gradually lengthened to two months. It was to these British courses that the first Australian NCO candidates were sent for training following the withdrawal from Gallipoli.[66]

The NCO schools faced the same challenges as every other training establishment in the rapidly expanding British armies: finding suitable instructors, establishing facilities and maintaining the necessary throughput to keep the army topped-up with qualified NCOs.[67] In addition to preparing NCOs for their general military duties, NCOs of the different corps and services also had to acquire the skills and knowledge of their speciality. For instance those filling appointments in machine-gun companies attended a five-week course at the Machine-gun Training Depot. Later, even if they had already attended this training and served in France, it was still necessary for them to pass a six-week refresher course at the depot if they were to return to assume duties as an instructor.[68]

Even qualified and experienced NCOs require regular training to hone their skills and to acquire new ones as doctrine changes. Following the Somme battles of 1916, NCO training became a regular feature of 1st Division unit training programs. For example, the 1st Divisional Signal Company ran a course for its junior commanders for a week in May 1917 prior to Third Ypres with the training 'intended as a "Refresher" Course and [it] proved very successful.'[69] A similar regime was instituted for the commissioned officers.

Initially most commissioned officers in the 1st Division were drawn from the available ex-militia and Citizen Forces officers with a leavening of Australian

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[66] Austin, *Our Dear Old Battalion*, pp 122–123; Army Council, *Army Council Instructions: February 1916*, HMSO, London, 20 February 1916, No 394, pp 75–76; and Williams, *Raising and Training the New Armies*, pp 120 and 133.

[67] For the problems of raising and running the NCO schools see: Williams, *Raising and Training the New Armies*, pp 121–122.

[68] Maj Gen JW McCay (GOC AIF Depots), Memorandum to Maj EJ Sexton (Commandant Aust Machine-gun Training Depot), 3 August 1917, AWM27, item 303/231; and Maj Gen JW McCay, Memorandum CR AIF 17638 (A) 'Aust Machine Gun Training Battalion: Grantham' to DAG AIF, 3 August 1917, AWM27, item 303/231.

[69] 1st Div Sig Coy (AIF), War Diary, 14–19 May 1917, AWM4, item 22/11/24.

and British regulars. This pool of pre-war trained officers was soon exhausted and the military authorities looked at other options for providing officer replacements. On Gallipoli suitable NCOs were promoted from the ranks on the recommendation of their CO and brigade commander, with the GOC AIF having the authority to commission them. This was the only system that could work while the division was on the Peninsula although it was recognised that a more comprehensive system of pre-commissioning training was needed.

Following the withdrawal various options were considered for the training of junior AIF officers. In Australia the authorities turned to RMC-A. Although RMC-A was fully occupied training its handful of regular officers, its grounds on the old pastoral property of Duntroon provided a suitable location for an Officer Training School (OTS). In February 1916 the Military Board decided to centralised all initial officer training for the AIF at Duntroon and in March the School was opened. It operated from March 1916 through until July 1917 and conducted seven courses, with all but the first being two months long. Course attendees ranged from 114 to 405 with the average being 255, although the failure rate was fairly high.[70]

Although candidates for the Officer Training School did not have recent operational experience this school did provide standardised training and many of its instructional staff had served on Gallipoli. Junior officers such as Captain (later Lieutenant General Sir) Sydney Rowell, who was a RMC-A graduate and Gallipoli veteran, arrived back in Australia and were posted to the OTS. He later wrote of this time:

> *In the year I was there each instructor had 300 potential officers through his hands. Some should never have been selected, while others failed to make the grade at the school. Those commissioned*

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[70] Darren Moore, *Duntroon: The Royal Military College of Australia 1911–2001*, Royal Military College of Australia, Canberra, 2001, p 50; AWM: OTS, 'Nominal Roll: No 5 Officer's Training School', 28 October 1916; OTS, 'Routine Order: No 47', 29 March 1917; OTS, 'Routine Order: No 49', 13 April 1917; and OTS, 'Routine Orders: No 70', 10 May 1917.

> *acquitted themselves in the field pretty well, and some were outstanding.*[71]

Despite the best efforts of the school the arrival of these trained but inexperienced reinforcement officers caused considerable dissention in the ranks of AIF veterans and eventually it closed.[72]

From mid-1916 the majority of 1st Division officers were trained within British pre-commissioning establishments. This system had seen considerable development and by the time the 1st Division arrived in France, it had matured to a state that was to sustain the British Army for the rest of the war. In February 1916 the British Army introduced a temporary commissioning scheme and, except for a few special corps, from that time on commissions were only granted to those who had served in the ranks. If a unit CO and brigade commander recommended a soldier, this recommendation was forwarded to the War Office for approval or in the case of the AIF it was staffed through division to Birdwood, who as GOC AIF could approve the recommendation. Once approved the officer candidate was sent for training at one of the British Officer Training Schools.

The British Army raised 22 such schools (also termed officer cadet schools or officer cadet battalions) during the Great War. Each school had a capacity to train some 400 cadets at any time, although this was raised to 600 in May 1917 if the school had sufficient surplus accommodation. The course was normally 20 weeks and during the war more than 73,000 cadets gained infantry commissions after being trained at one of the Officer Training Schools. British officers rated the training received by the officer candidates as very thorough and the system certainly served the 1st Division well.[73]

While AIF officer candidates completed the same training as their British cousins, once commissioned the BEF and AIF diverged in their employment of

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[71] Sydney F Rowell, *Full Circle*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1974, p 30.

[72] Moore, *Duntroon*, p 51.

[73] Williams, *Raising and Training the New Armies*, pp 95–100 and 103–104; and Graves, *Good-Bye to All That*, p 243.

the new officer. In the AIF it was usual for the newly commissioned officer to return to his parent battalion, while British officers were normally sent to serve in another battalion of the same regiment. For both however, promotion after this was dependant on performance and further training.[74]

By late 1916 a newly commissioned AIF officer would typically spend several months in regimental service, learning on-the-job, before being sent to a school of instruction for further training. This training was usually conducted at a divisional or corps school and the type of course depended on the individual's corps speciality. For example, over the winter of 1916–17 I ANZAC ran a series of one-month courses each for 50 infantry students, of which 20 were to be young officers and the other 30 were to be non-commissioned. These courses were pitched specifically at the skills required by platoon leaders, with the tactical instruction based on the recently promulgated platoon doctrine.[75]

Further advancement was accompanied by further training. Commencing in early 1916 the War Office introduced an intermediate training course for those subalterns who had performed at least three months' regimental duty and were reported as fit for higher training by their CO. Starting in March this course ran for six to eight weeks and was designed to produce an officer capable of commanding a company.[76]

A similar belated excellence marked the development of senior officer training. Probably because of the emphasis on long-service, experience and pragmatism in the pre-war British Army, the needs of the large numbers of rapidly promoted ex-civilian field rank officers were all but neglected until midway through the war. It took until March 1916 before the Army Council proposed to complete the educational ladder of the regimental officer by conducting a course 'with a view to giving such higher instruction to selected company commanders as will fit them for the command of a battalion.' Staggeringly this scheme for a Senior

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[74] Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches*, p 168; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 53–54.

[75] BGGS, HQ I ANZAC G188/1/288 GS Circular No 72: 'Schools', 23 April 1917, AWM27, item 305/13; and Lt Col AM Ross, I ANZAC Corps School 'Infantry School Syllabus' (3rd Course), nd, AWM27, item 305/14.

[76] Williams, *Raising and Training the New Armies*, pp 106–107.

Officers' Course remained in abeyance until late that year when in October the first course commenced.[77]

Officers attending the Senior Officers' Course were captains, majors and an occasional lieutenant colonel, all of who were selected for their potential for unit command. Each course was run for 200 students, including around 30 from the dominions. The instructional staff of nearly 30 included an engineer instructor, a drill adjutant and a pilot. On a typical course conducted in late 1917 there were a total of five officers who had served with the 1st Division, including Major Alfred Bennett, CMG DSO; Major Herbert Carter; Captain Augustus Oates, DSO; Major Claude St Paul Ross, MC; and Major Harry Vernon.[78]

The tragedy for the 1st Division (and the rest of the AIF and BEF) is that it took the British Army more than two years before it began to prepare senior officers with appropriate training. In some ways the BEF was simply a victim of the pre-war approach to training and the army's incapacity to rapidly expand in wartime however it cost the army and the empire dearly; and if the British Army was slow to acknowledge the training needs of senior commanders it was even more derelict in acknowledging the investment required to school its staff.

One of the first acts of the British Army on mobilisation in 1914 was to close its Staff College. Given the lessons of the Boer War this is a particularly incomprehensible decision and one of the very real weaknesses in the mobilisation of the BEF was the disregard shown towards husbanding the precious few trained staff officers. It was also one of the serious weaknesses of

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[77] Williams, *Raising and Training the New Armies*, p 108.

[78] This information is drawn from the nominal roll of the fifth course. Of the officers cited: Alfred Bennett had already commanded the 4th and 1st battalions on Gallipoli and would later command the 20th Battalion; Herbert Carter began his service with the 1st Battalion and following Gallipoli he was appointed CO 5th Pioneer Battalion; Augustus Oates served with the 7th Battalion before transferring to the Indian Army in 1917; Claude Ross later commanded the 9th Battalion; and Harry Vernon returned to France to serve as the senior major of the 2nd Battalion. *Notes for Commanding Officers (5th Course)*, 1917, pp vii–xvi; Chris McConville, 'Bennett, Alfred Joshua (1865–1946)', *ADB*, Vol 7, pp 267–268; DG Gallon, 'Carter, Herbert Gordon (1885–1963)', *ADB*, Vol 7, pp 582–583; 'Distinguished service record', *Hamilton Spectator*, 17 August 1976, papers of the 7th Bn (AIF) Association, AWM: PR 87/215, Box 3, 26; 'In India's Service', *Sabretache*, Vol 19, No 3 (July 1978) p 61; NAA: B2455, file ROSS CLAUDE FRANCIS ST PAUL; and B2455, file VERNON, Harry Gordon.

the AIF and when Bridges was given his choice of the available officers he practically denuded the country of every staff college graduate.[79]

Good staff officers are a rare commodity and it was only in the last decades leading up to the Great War that the British Army established a formal staff corps of specially trained staff officers. This decision, hastened by the problems encountered due to poor staff work during the Boer War, led to the establishment of the Imperial General Staff—a body that was to include qualified dominion officers. Recognising the importance of this training a succession of Australian officers were sent to attend the British Staff College at Camberley and the Indian Army Staff College at Quetta. It was to these officers that Bridges first looked when he raised the 1st Division.[80]

Bridges original staff included five staff college graduates, a tally that was better than most contemporary British divisions. All of these men would go on to prove the worth of their training and two—Cyril Brudenell White and Thomas Blamey—would rise to the highest ranks and prove to be among the most capable staff officers produced by the war. On Gallipoli the supply of staff officers was adequate although from time to time well-educated regimental officers had to be drafted in to replace casualties among the brigade staff. This scheme survived the Gallipoli campaign and even allowed the 1st Division to provide a nucleus of trained staff for the 2nd Australian Division but it could not meet the demands of the ANZAC expansion into two corps.

Up until the withdrawal from Gallipoli the 1st Division's staff was predominately Australian regulars with a sprinkling of British officers. Following the 1916 expansion of the AIF the increased demand for qualified staff could only be met by drawing on additional British officers to fill some of the division's senior

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[79] Brian Bond, *The Victorian Army and the Staff College 1854–1914*, Eyre Methuen, London, 1972, p 303; and Godwin-Austen, *The Staff and the Staff College*, pp 263 and 270.

[80] Australian officers trained at Camberley before 1914 were: Lieutenant Cyril Brudenell White, Lieutenant Henry Macartney, Captain Edgar Reynolds, Major Cecil Foott, and Captain John Lavarack. The British officers who were trained at Camberley and were in Australia in 1914 include: Captains John Gellibrand, Duncan Glasfurd, Charles Gwynn, and Francis Irvine. Australian officers trained at Quetta before 1914 were: Captains Edmond Drake Brockman, O'Brien, Eric Harrison, and Thomas Blamey. AWM182, item 1A.

appointments and expanding the use of regimental officers in the lower-grade ones. Those selected to join the staff were generally talented subalterns with front-line experience who possessed appropriate education and character. They were temporarily detached from their units to serve on the staff under instruction and after a period, usually several months, they were either deemed suitable or were returned to their units. Thus the AIF, in common with the BEF, was forced to rely on the on-the-job training of promising officers as 'learners' to fill their junior staff appointments. Only when the 1st Division arrived in France did it have the opportunity to send some of these officers back to school.

In the winter of 1915–16 General Headquarters BEF established the first staff course in France, although most formations had to make do with searching out suitable candidates for on-the-job training. The obvious limitations of this approach, especially the lack of conformity between army and corps staff procedures and the inconsistency of instruction led in April 1916 to the establishment of a more systemic method of staff selection and training. Under this scheme candidates for the staff were selected by general officers in command appointments, with candidates not usually below the rank of captain. These candidates were supposed to have served as a unit adjutant, performed some sort of staff duties, or demonstrated some special administrative aptitude. From these officers the War Office selected suitable officers for a month's practical training on the staff of a brigade, division or senior headquarters. After their attachment those that had shown their worth were then sent to attend a six-week staff course.[81]

The first of the new British staff courses commenced on 22 April 1916 and it was initially conducted at Hesdin in France, although this was later expanded to include schools at Camberley and Cambridge in Britain. The syllabus was a very abbreviated form of the old pre-war, two-year staff course with the students covering only the practical aspects of staff work. Needless to say this training was of necessity intensive but by September 1917 the situation had improved to the extent that appointments to the staff could now be restricted to officers who

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[81] Army Council, *Army Council Instructions: April 1916*, HMSO, London, 11 April 1916, No 786, p 50; and Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914–18*, p 42.

had either passed a pre-war staff college, passed one of the wartime staff courses, previously served on the staff, or those who had successfully completed an attachment as a 'learner'.[82]

Staff training was also hierarchical and unless there were exceptional circumstances staff officers were expected to step-through the training and gain the prerequisite experience before they could be promoted. Entry level for those who were to be employed in a grade three staff appointment (GSO3 or staff captain) was a satisfactory attachment to a formation headquarters as a 'learner'. To be employed at the next level, grade two (GSO2, DAAG, DAQMG, DAAQMG and brigade major), the officer had to attend the Junior Staff Course (JSC) with selection for the JSC being restricted to those who had already served as a brigade major, GSO3 or staff captain or those who had competed a successful attachment as a 'learner'. To take the next step to grade one level (GSO1, AAG, AQMG and AAQMG), the officer had to attend the Senior Staff Course (SSC), with selection for this course being based on prior employment in a grade two appointment. Those officers who obtained certificates at these schools were distinguished by the letters *SC* signifying qualification at a SSC, and *sc* for qualification at a JSC. [83]

To illustrate how the system worked it is worth examining the experience of the 1st Division during one month in the latter half of the war. In October 1917, at the height of Third Ypres, the division had a total of six officers attached to various headquarters as staff learners. On HQ I ANZAC Captain Noel Cuthbert was attached to the 'G' Branch; as a trainee brigade major, HQ 1st Division had Captain John Rogers, MC; as a trainee GSO3 the division had Lieutenant Austin Laughlin, MC; and there were also three officers attached as trainee staff captains. Cuthbert later joined the Fifth Army staff, while Laughlin and Rogers went on to be appointed successive GSO3 of the 1st Division, and Captain

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[82] Williams, *Raising and Training the New Armies*, pp 114–115.

[83] Bond, *The Victorian Army and the Staff College*, p 304; and Godwin-Austin, *The Staff and the Staff College*, pp 264–265; Army Council, *Army Council Instructions: September 1917*, HMSO, London, 7 September 1917, No 1379, pp 14–15.

Hector Bastin (one of the trainee staff captains) soon left the AIF to take up a regular commission with the Indian Army.[84]

Wartime staff training was important to the AIF in preparing a new generation of junior staff officers but there were limits to what could be achieved. For the 1st Division its senior staff officers (GSO1 and AAQMG) remained regular officers for the duration of the war and so while the expanded AIF benefited from the rise of a new breed of talented amateurs, this was only possible because of the guiding hands and steadying influence of a number of long-serving regulars, most of whom had been trained in the pre-war staff colleges.[85]

TRAINING ON THE WESTERN FRONT

As well as the institutional training of reinforcements, non-commissioned officers and officers, the 1st Division's units also spent a considerable amount of time conducting their own individual and collective training. Much of the early training, following the move to the Western Front, involved introducing the troops to the various individual aspects of trench warfare that had been absent on Gallipoli. Later significant effort was invested in practising the new collective tactics and procedures that evolved from the experience gained on the battlefields of France and Flanders.

When the 1st Division arrived in France in March 1916 it was first exposed to the BEF's training school system. These schools ranged from General Headquarters (GHQ) schools, to those run by the armies and corps, down to division and even brigade schools. The development of this system however, was a slow process since the British Army had no experience in this type of mass training for a continental-scale army.[86] What these various in-theatre

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[84] AIF, *Staff and Regimental Lists of Officers*, October 1917, p 249; and December 1917, p 263; 'In India's Service', *Sabretache*, Vol 19, No 3 (July 1978) p 61; and R Clarke, 'Lieutenant-Colonel Hector Ernest Bastin, MC, MID', *Sabretache*, Vol 18, No 3 (July 1977) pp 182–184.

[85] All of the 1st Division's permanent GSO1s and AAQMGs were either Australian, British or New Zealand regulars and the majority of the GSO2s and DAAQMG/DAAG were also regulars.

[86] The development of the BEF's schools system has been credited to General Sir Charles Monro who established the first army school in BEF in late 1915 before taking over from Hamilton on Gallipoli. Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front*, pp 90–91.

schools aimed to provide was the most up-to-date preparation for new organisations and personnel as they learnt how to deal with the evolving conditions of trench warfare. Part of the unique requirements of trench warfare included an array of novelties, which were produced in response to the solidification of the front. As such the Gallipoli veterans of the 1st Division had little experience with the wide variety of factory-produced grenades, poisonous gas, and large-scale artillery barrages. So when soldiers and officers of the division arrived in France they found themselves sent back at school. Initially they were sent to some of the Second Army schools, while British instructors were also loaned to the division.[87]

After the hard lessons of 1916, the 1st Division entered the following year bloodied but wiser. During the winter of 1916–17 the lessons learned from the Somme fighting percolated upwards where they were studied and distilled and early in the New Year new doctrine, based on these lessons, flowed back down the chain of command. This doctrine was then incorporated into the training programs of the BEF's burgeoning school system.[88]

Over the winter of 1916–17 all 1st Division unit war diaries record a constant stream of officers and NCOs proceeding to various GHQ, army, corps or divisional schools.[89] The profit from this investment was that at unit level:

> *…almost every company had a specialist instructor for Lewis gunnery, bombing, musketry and bayonet fighting. A Brigade school for infantry training was also commenced, and as many of*

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[87] Members of the 1st Division attended British schools of instruction at the Grenade School, NCO School, Trench Mortar School and School of Sniping, while others were trained in anti-gas measures and in physical training and bayonet fighting. In addition Second Army loaned the division five Lewis gun instructors. GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 7 and 11 April 1916, AWM4, item 1/42/15; and Bean, *AOH* Vol III, pp 87–88.

[88] The 1st Division School was formed in November 1916 and operated until 1 May 1917. Over the winter and spring a total of 802 1st Division subalterns and NCOs were trained at this school, with most attending the month long infantry school which taught the new platoon tactics. Maj RB Smythe (GSO2 1st Aust Div), 'First Australian Division School. Tirancourt', nd, AWM4, 1/42/27 part 2 appendix XV.

[89] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, November 1916–April 1917, AWM4, items 1/42/22–1/42/27; and 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 13 and 24 August 1916, AWM 4, item 23/18/10.

> *the newly appointed NCOs as could be spared were detailed to attend and received special instruction.*[90]

By early 1917 the BEF's school system was both comprehensive and adapting to the new challenges of operations on the Western Front. Not only was new equipment being taught at these schools, the schools were also involved in disseminating 'lessons learned' through the promulgation and teaching of evolving all-arms doctrine. Battalion officers were also often called to divisional headquarters to attend lectures on this new doctrine, particularly artillery operations.[91] Furthermore, good COs also instituted lectures for their officers either to pass on information on these new subjects or to address matters that they considered needed attention within the unit training program.[92]

On the Western Front, units also developed a new level of collective skill. This skill could only be acquired slowly and at considerable cost with the 1st Division profiting from the BEF's faltering attempts to gather and circulate 'lessons learned', especially following the heavy fighting on the Somme in 1916. Many of these observations were passed to GHQ, with the individual armies and corps producing their own summaries on the conduct of their operations, while GHQ had a number published by its Stationery Service. Although the evidence indicates that this information was promulgated, it also appears that it was left largely to the individual commanders at division and corps to act upon them.[93]

Within the 1st Division its experience on the Somme yielded a host of lessons. Both divisional headquarters and HQ I ANZAC identified problem areas and provided guidance to units on subjects that required closer attention in training. For example, following the 1st Division's first attack at Pozières, I ANZAC sent a

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[90] Newton, *The Story of the Twelfth*, p 139.

[91] For example in one five day period, while the 1st Battalion was out of the line, 12 officers were called away to attend external lectures on the heavy artillery, counter battery, gas and courts-martial. 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 12, 15, 16 and 20 January 1917, AWM 4, item 23/18/15.

[92] Officer training was often delivered at night while the troops were relaxing. For example Major Jacobs, the second-in-command of the 1st Battalion, lectured the battalion's subalterns on successive nights on trench standing orders and trench warfare. 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 15 and 16 January 1917, AWM 4, item 23/18/15.

[93] PRO: WO158/344.

circular to its divisions noting a number of inadequacies that had been observed in the fighting. Foremost among these was the requirement to have all officers and non-commissioned officers instructed in the use of the Lewis gun. Down at the unit level this directive was translated into practical arrangements whereby all ranks were to receive one hours' training on the Lewis, with the training being delivered by the battalion specialists.[94]

This type of instruction was a reflection of the growing pressure towards decentralisation in tactics that was being felt throughout the BEF. The fighting on the Somme had further demonstrated the utility of the platoon as a fighting organisation and this made its mark in the development of doctrine. Throughout 1916 the battalion specialists, such as the bombers and Lewis gun teams, were gradually being pushed down to lower levels. So while unit specialist officers continued to train the teams, the actual bomb squads and Lewis gun detachments were increasingly regarded as part of the company and in some cases the platoon. This decentralisation demanded new doctrine to support new tactics and it placed ever-greater demands on junior leaders.

In November 1916 I ANZAC issued revised instructions for tactical training stressing:

> *The success of future operations will greatly depend on the thoroughness of…tactical training, and the corps commander desires the importance emphasised of the tactical instruction and the use of ground, which is now being carried out at divisional schools…. It must be impressed on all platoon leaders that each of them will now have a "self-contained command" and that it is within the power of each one of them to influence to a very considerable extent the course of an action by his skill, his resolution, and his courage.*[95]

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[94] 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 2 August, 31 August and 14 November 1916, AWM 4, items 23/18/10 and 13.

[95] HQ I ANZAC, G130/83 GS Circular No 30 'Organisation, Training, and Fighting of Infantry Battalion', 16 December 1916, AWM27, item 303/150.

These instructions however, were a case of corps catching up with what units were already doing and the experience of the 1st Division suggests that most of the tactical fermentation in this period that led to the 'rise' of the platoon was in fact driven from below at unit and brigade level, rather than from the top down.

Three months before I ANZAC's exhortation, the 1st Division's training programs were already setting training tasks for platoon commanders. Typical of this effort was the 1st Battalion training program for the period 14 to 25 September, which included platoon training in crater snatching and trench raiding. This training specified that the parties were to include bombers and bayonet men covered by Lewis guns.[96]

The emphasis on training in the 1st Division while not unique is notable and it permeated from the top. Harold Walker took close interest in the training conducted by his brigades and battalions and he was not prepared to 'rubber-stamp' training if he thought it not up to standard. In March 1917 he received a number of draft training programs and finding these inadequate sent them back for modification in accordance with a sample syllabus prepared by his headquarters. Walker would also personally lecture the officers of the division during his frequent visits—his favourite subject being interior economy or administration.[97] Nor was this a one-man show as he also dispatched his staff and the specialist advisers to do the same.[98]

The year 1917 was the tipping point for the 1st Division and this is based on two important factors related to training. First, 1917 was the year when the division spent more time training than in any other year, in fact three times as much than either 1916 or 1918.[99] Second, it was the year when the division focussed on

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[96] 1st Bn (AIF), 'Training programme for period 14th to 25th September 1916', nd, AWM4, item 23/18/11.

[97] 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 15 September 1916, AWM 4, item 23/18/11.

[98] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 11 March 1917, AWM4, item 1/42/26; 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 15 September 1916, AWM4, item 23/18/11; and 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 20 January and 14, 17 and 20 March 1917, AWM4, items 23/18/15 and 23/18/17.

[99] During 1917 the division spent 98 days on administration, 121 days training and 146 days on operations. In 1916 the division spent 279 days on the Western Front, with 54 days devoted to

totally new doctrine and radically new methods of training. In 1917 training focussed heavily on the platoon and company as self-contained fighting sub-units. This devolution was accompanied, indeed driven, by the increased firepower available to these sub-unit commanders. This led to junior leaders being given greater authority to prepare and conduct their own training, so that within the division unit training was usually conducted under company arrangements with the focus on the employment of platoons in the assault. This training began as 'dry' training, followed by blank firing mock attacks and progressed to platoon and company live-fire attacks. As one soldier recalled:

> *We now started practicing stunts a lot. It seemed silly after the real thing, but they were not nearly as monotonous as drill. Generally we would march out…to the scene of one of our past struggles where the barbed-wire and trenches were still more or less sound and the ground was a mess of shell-holes. A trench half-a-mile or more distant would be the objective with an imaginary enemy holding various parts in it and on the way to it. Sometimes we used live ammunition and bombs, at other times dummy ones.*[100]

The use of live ammunition in this manner was virtually unknown in the 1st Division in 1915, rare in 1916 but became commonplace in 1917. Anthony Kellet suggests that this was not generally the case in the BEF, and the French only adopted live-fire after seeing it used at the Canadian Corps School in late 1917. Certainly one British officer was surprised in February 1918 at the risks French troops were taking in their live fire training, indicating that most of the BEF probably remained well behind their allies and the dominion contingents.

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administration, 34 days to training and 191 days to operations. In 1918 the division spent 315 days on the Western Front, with 54 days given over to administration, 46 days to training and 215 days to operations. In relative terms this meant that the division spent 30 percent of its time training in 1917 but only eight percent in 1916 and seven percent in 1918. GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 28 March 1916–11 November 1918, AWM4, items 1/42/14–1/42/46.

[100] Dudley Jackson, 'In the Back Areas 1917', *Stand To*, Vol 11, No 2 (April–June 1967) p 40; and 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 18 February 1917, AWM4, item 23/18/16.

This is surprising since the 3rd Australian Division was using live-fire training during its preparation in Britain in late 1916.[101]

The reasons for the slow adoption of live-fire training are complex. In part it reflects the constraints that shaped the thinking of peacetime British officers and in part it reflected the ammunition restrictions that plagued the BEF in the early years of the war. By 1917 however, many of the pre-war restrictions had been swept away and as Britain's industrial mobilisation gained traction, its factories were producing sufficient quantities of ammunition for fighting as well as for training. In March 1917 while the 1st Division was out of the line, it received a weekly allowance of more than 6000 grenades, 100,000 rounds of small arms ammunition, and 150 trench mortar bombs. In addition extra resources could be requested for special training tasks.[102] What was harder to change was the peacetime mindset of many senior officers; fortunately Walker was not one of these.

Although senior headquarters continued to provide broad guidance on training throughout this period, the actual direction of training was still driven by division. In the 1st Division, Walker and his staff provided the outline program and areas of focus for a specific period of training and this was then carried through under brigade and battalion arrangements.[103] To ensure common compliance, the GOC and senior operations staff regularly visited formation and unit training. In addition central demonstrations were conducted to ensure uniformity of practice.[104] To aid the formations, each brigade was allocated manoeuvre areas

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[101] Anthony Kellett, *Combat Motivation*, Kluwer Nijhoff Publishing, Boston, 1982, p 82; John Terraine (ed), *General Jack's Diary 1914–1918*, Eyre and Spottswoode, London, 1964, p 193; and Michael Molkentin, 'Trench warfare 101: Training at the Bustard trenches', *Wartime*, Issue 33, pp 48–50.

[102] Maj E Beddington (for MGGS), HQ Fifth Army Memorandum GA39/0/33, 28 November 1917; Lt Col TA Blamey (GSO1), 1st Aust Div memorandum to 1st, 2nd and 3rd inf bdes, 6 March 1917; and 1st Aust Div memorandum to 1st Pioneer Bn (AIF), 7 March 1917. All on AWM25, item 21/4.

[103] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, GS Memorandum No 9 'Training', 25 January 1918, AWM4, 1/42/36 part 11.

[104] For example on 10 March 1917 the 9th Battalion (AIF), which had been especially selected by the GOC for the purpose, provided a practical attack demonstration for the remainder of the

where one or more battalions could undertake tactical training. This training often took the form of battalion training in the morning followed by tactical training under brigade arrangements in the afternoon. Invariably the CO would debrief the officers in the evening on the results of the day, praising the good and admonishing the inadequate.[105]

Following the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line in April 1917, 1st Division training took a different turn. In the aftermath of the outpost battles that were fought in closing-up to the new German line at Hermies, Boursies and Demicourt, Walker recognised that additional training was required not so much on the assault in trench warfare, rather on the advance-to-contact in open operations. In response the division instituted a series of battalion and brigade training days given over to advanced guard and outpost operations, while the platoons and companies refreshed themselves on more open tactics and formations.[106]

Central to the development of this training was the promulgation of new doctrine, which was to guide the division for the rest of the war. Published in early 1917, it was issued in time for its incorporation into training before the Third Ypres campaign. The two cornerstone documents were: *Instructions for the Training of Platoons for Offensive Action, 1917* (SS143); and *Instructions for the Training of Divisions for Offensive Action* (SS135).[107]

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division with its companies organised along the lines of the new doctrine of self-contained fighting platoons. AWM27, item 304/41.

[105] Maj PSS Woodforde (CO 1st Bn AIF), 'Training Programme for period of 21 days 12/1/17 to 1/2/17', 12 January 1917, AWM 4, item 23/18/15 appendix.

[106] 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 28-31 March, 4–8 and 29 June 1917, AWM 4, items 23/18/17 and 23/18/20; Austin, *Rough as Bags*, pp 376–377, appendix 9; Newton, *The Story of the Twelfth*, pp 142–143.

[107] GS WO, *Instruction for the Training of Platoons for Offensive Action* (SS143), Army Printing and Stationary Services, 1917; GS WO, *Instructions for the Training of Divisions for Offensive Action* (SS135), Army Printing and Stationary Services, 1917. Both of these publications were published in early 1917 and issued to the 1st Division in March, with further copies following in April and July. Minor amendments were also promulgated in April, June and July. BGGS, HQ I ANZAC Memorandum G136/238 'Instructions for the training of platoons for offensive action', 21 April 1917; BGGS, HQ I ANZAC Memorandum G136/248 'SS135—Instructions for the Training of Divisions for Offensive Action—SS143 Instructions for the Training of Platoons for Offensive Action, 1917', 24 June 1917; and BGGS, HQ I ANZAC Memorandum G27/426 'Instructions for the training of divisions for offensive action (SS135); Instructions for the training of platoons for offensive action 1917 (SS143)', 5 July 1917. All held on AWM27, item 303/140.

This doctrine called for a reorganisation of the infantry battalion to allow it to employ the new offensive tactics to full effect. To implement this change I ANZAC directed each of its divisions to detail a single platoon, including all of its specialists to attend training at the corps school. These platoons were trained as 'model' platoons and then returned to their division to be used to instruct the rest of the newly organised platoons. After implementation of the new organisation, further guidance was provided two months later in the form of a supplementary pamphlet covering *The Organization of an Infantry Battalion and the Normal Formation for the Attack* (SS600).[108]

In the reorganisation that accompanied implementation of the new doctrine, Walker specifically directed his formation commanders to 'push on with the work of reorganisation of the Units as rapidly as possible.'[109] Furthermore, appreciating the importance that non-commissioned officers would play in the new organisation, he directed that if necessary the brigade commanders were to establish special training classes for their sergeants and corporals. In at least one of the 1st Division brigades, the unit COs and brigade sub-units were then directed to form unit classes for just this purpose.[110]

Hand-in-glove with the new platoon doctrine was a revived emphasis on what might be described as loose order tactics. In trench warfare, tactical formations in the attack focussed on waves of assault troops. In March 1917 however, new instructions were issued for training units in what was termed 'artillery formation'. This open order formation was designed to allow units and sub-units to advance in tactical configurations that were not only was less vulnerable to artillery fire, they were also less vulnerable to flanking machine-guns. While this style of formation was already well known in 1915, and it had been used in the division's training in Egypt, the peculiarities of trench warfare had led to its

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[108] GS WO, *The Organization of an Infantry Battalion and the Normal Formation for the Attack* (SS600), April 1917.

[109] Col TA Blamey (GSO1), Memorandum to 3rd Inf Bde (AIF), 13 May 1917, AWM27, item 303/147.

[110] BM 3rd Inf Bde (AIF), Memorandum to brigade units, 14 May 1917, AWM27, item 303/147.

relegation and neglect. By early 1917 however, the BEF saw its potential in any return to more mobile operations.[111]

Although the relative importance of training on the Western Front is difficult to measure we can say that the 1st Division's commanders at every level took training seriously, and in comparison with many other divisions in the BEF it was well trained. Certainly some of the credit for this must be given to the stability that the division enjoyed. Except for short periods, the 1st Division served its time on the Western Front in 1916 and 1917 under the same corps and with the same GOC and GSO1. This was not the case with most British divisions that experienced considerable organisational churn by having to move from corps to corps on a regular basis. As Guy Dawnay, deputy Chief of Staff at GHQ, noted:

> *There is no doubt that our training system is neither perfectly coordinated nor evenly distributed through the armies. I am constantly being told by divisions moving from corps to corps and from army to army that they are being taught different doctrines as they move from one command to another.*[112]

Based on what Dawnay had to say we can acknowledge that the 1st Division was probably among the 'best practice' divisions of the BEF and at least on par with any other dominion or elite British division.[113]

In comparison with its German opponents, the 1st Division's training also stands as sound. Much has been made of the live-fire, low-level training of the German storm-troopers, and in general British training methods may have been a little behind these elite units, but the units of the 1st Division appear to have been at

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[111] Lt Col TA Blamey (GSO1), 1st Aust Div GS Memorandum No 18, 26 March 1917, AWM27, item 303/153. For the use of artillery formation in training in Egypt and its use at Krithia see: Pte L Pennefather (7th Bn AIF) quoted in Austin, *Our Dear Old Battalion*, p 63.

[112] Guy Dawnay quoted in Dennis Winter, *Haig's Command: A Reassessment*, Viking Press, New York, 1991, pp 146–147.

[113] Ivor Maxse was also highly critical of the BEF's habit of rapidly shifting divisions from corps to corps. IWM: Maxse papers, Box 11, File 55 (1): Court of Inquiry, para 11. Also see: Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914–18*, pp 19–21.

least as well trained as the enemies best. The 1st Division's battalions were by 1917 routinely practicing live-fire training in accordance with BEF doctrine and these rehearsals involved live-fire assaults over realistic terrain, just as the storm-troopers did. The success of 1st Division during Third Ypres in 1917 and at Hazebrouck in 1918 can in part be attributed to this effort.[114]

Following the bloody fighting in Flanders in 1917 the 1st Division had an extensive period over the winter to rest and recover. Once again the division used these months to train or retrain its officers and soldiers at various schools. These schools saw a regular stream of 1st Division personnel attending courses at the division's own school and the Australian Corps School as well as British corps, army and GHQ schools. During January 1918, 454 members of the 1st Division were sent away on course while in February this jumped to 568.[115] Down at unit level this meant that a battalion during this period might expect to have around five officers and about 100 soldiers detached to various schools either as instructors or as students.[116]

Nor was training seen as just a break from the trenches. A subaltern attending a Lewis gun school in February 1918 recorded a series of entries in his diary that demonstrate the importance attached to school training:

> *I sat up writing copious notes till midnight. There are thousands of pages to be written and learnt. Had a busy day writing up more*

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[114] Training was not without its risks and throughout its history the division suffered a steady but low number of training casualties, some fatal. For examples see: Harris, *Signal Adventure*, p 23; Sgt LT Gwyther (2nd BAC AIF), diary entries, 21–22 August 1915, SLV: MS11300; Lt Col A Sturdee (CO 2nd Fd Ambulance AIF), diary entry, 21 August 1915, ADFA: MS183; Sgt HP Molony (5th Bn AIF), diary entry, 17 February 1916, SLV: MS 10984; Cpl W Peach (7th Bn AIF), diary entry, 5 August 1916, papers of the 7th Bn Association, AWM: PR 87/215, Box 2, folder 16 of 29; 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 19–20 February and 21 March 1917, AWM4, items 23/18/16–23/18/17; 'Proceedings of Court of Inquiry', 17 September 1918, AWM25, item 229/4; and 'Proceedings of Court of Enquiry', 17 October 1918, AWM25, item 229/5.

[115] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, 'Officers and Other Ranks Sent to School, January 1918', AWM4, 1/42/36 part 11; and GS HQ 1st Aust Div, 'Officers and Other Ranks Sent to Schools. February, 1918', AWM4, item 1/42/37 part 3.

[116] This is based on the 1st Battalion's strength on 26 March 1918 (27 officers and 589 ORs) when word was received that all army and corps schools had been cancelled on account of the German offensive, and its strength on 28 March 1918 (32 officers and 680 ORs) when the majority of those personnel returned to the unit. 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, January and 26–28 March 1918, AWM4, items 23/18/13, 23/18/14, 23/18/27 and 23/18/29.

> *notes and have at last got abreast of them, thank the Lord…. Exams are coming off tomorrow so I must fag a bit tonight. Our "old man"* [the CO] *is very hot on these schools passes and he is a gent who needs must be propitiated. So in deference to his whims—I fag.* [117]

Even as the manpower crisis of 1918 loomed a typical infantry battalion could expect to have at least six sergeant instructors as part of the battalion's Establishment. These positions were deemed so important that they were not to be sacrificed even if the battalion's strength dropped and the number of platoons reduced. This was a transformation that was not confined to the 1st Division, rather it reflected a change that swept the BEF.[118]

By 1918 the BEF had matured as a learning organisation. There was considerable improvement in the promulgation of lessons-learned throughout the force and it had issued updated and definitive instructions on the training and employment of infantry divisions.[119] When the German offensive commenced in March, GHQ was quick to produce a series of 'Notes on Recent Fighting'. This series was published by the General Staff Branch at GHQ and, depending on the subject, were distributed to brigade, division or corps and some were also pushed down to battalion and even battery level.[120]

It was only in the light of German success that GHQ finally acknowledged the need provide all formations with adequate opportunities to train. As it acknowledged:

> *Without this uninterrupted periodical training, it is quite impossible to obtain satisfactory results in a war in which the personnel*

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[117] Lt S Traill (1st Bn AIF), diary entries, 7, 8 and 15 February 1918, AWM: 2DRL/0711.

[118] Table A "Battalion Temporarily Reduced to Lower Establishment (900 Other Ranks)', AWM27, item 303/137.

[119] GS, GHQ BEF, *The Training and Employment of Divisions, 1918. Revised Edition* (SS135 OB/1635), GHQ BEF, January 1918; and GS, GHQ BEF, *Instructions for the Training of the British Armies in France (Revised Edition)* (SS152), GHQ BEF, January 1918.

[120] The first of the 'Notes on Recent Fighting' was issued on 5 April 1918 and the last on 6 November 1918 and in all 24 were produced. PRO: WO158/70.

> *changes so rapidly and in which the conditions in the line afford so little opportunity for training. The whole question is, therefore, intimately bound up with that of the strength of the army in relation to the length of the line which it is called upon to hold. Unless the needs of training can be definitely taken into account as one of the factors in determining this relation, no really far reaching improvement can be anticipated, though it will be, and is, possible to effect improvement in a number of minor directions.*[121]

Furthermore, there was finally a call to establish an Inspectorate of Training to assist army commanders in enforcing standards and doctrinal conformity. This task fell to Ivor Maxse, one of the BEF's noted tactical thinkers and trainers.[122]

Although the establishment of the Inspectorate of Training finally placed the BEF's training on a systematic basis, the peculiarities of the British command style and the lateness of this measure meant that little could be achieved in the remaining months of the war. Most tactical innovation was still driven from the bottom up and it took considerable time before these lessons rose to GHQ to be distilled and then promulgated as new doctrine. It took even longer for this new doctrine to permeate throughout the BEF and there was still no guarantee that doctrine would be uniformly applied.

In contrast the Australian Corps, under Lieutenant General John Monash with Brigadier General Thomas Blamey as his chief of staff, appears to have maintained a strong sense of doctrinal uniformity and emphasis on training. HQ Australian Corps promulgated policy notes to its divisions and it was made clear that this guidance was to be the basis of training. For example when the divisional machine-gun battalions were formed in mid-1918 the corps' parent

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[121] Maj Gen GP Dawnay, letter OB/2266 to Director of Staff Duties, 9 July 1918, IWM: Dawnay papers, 69/21/4, vol titled 'Organization and Training 1918–19'.

[122] A training section was raised at GHQ in early 1917 under the able direction of Brigadier General A Solly-Flood. As the Head of Training Branch, Solly-Flood was responsible for the production of many of the doctrine publications that reshaped the way the BEF fought in the latter part of the war but he did not have the authority to ensure compliance with the doctrine nor did he have any control over training standards. Maxse's appointment as Inspector-General of Training improved matters but again this was too little and too late. Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914–18*, pp 94–97.

formation (Fourth Army) dispatched a two-page memorandum outlining the organisation and command arrangements for the new battalions. Even before this was received the Australian Corps had already promulgated its own memorandum, in the form of a four-and-a-half page document outlining the corps policy regarding the employment of machine-guns. Not only did Monash's HQ pass on the army policy but its own instructions, which conformed with that policy, included a more thorough treatment of the subject and included one-and-a-half pages of guidance on training issues and lessons learned in recent fighting that were to be emphasised in training.[123]

It is also clear that the 1st Division's units actively sought to adopt and train to the new regulations. Even while fully occupied conducting fatigue tasks, the 1st Battalion still had regular lectures on tactics illustrated with the use of sand tables when they were available. Later in the year, when the Australians were withdrawn for rest and training, emphasis was given to live-fire training with multiple ranges used for a variety of company and platoon attack practices.[124]

The experience of the 1st Division is typical of the AIF approach to doctrine and training during the latter years of the war. The opportunities to develop junior leadership and initiative in the 'peaceful penetration' campaign provided many lessons that commanders were keen to exploit. After a series of effective small patrol actions during May 1918 the CO 1st Battalion (AIF), Lieutenant Colonel Bertie Stacy—the same officer who was nearly killed on Gallipoli by a poorly trained reinforcement—prepared a number of reports highlighting the implications for doctrine and training. Some of these suggested variations to doctrine where practical experience had shown a better way, demonstrating that doctrine was seen only as a basis for continuous improvement. And Stacy was

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[123] HQ Aust Corps, Memorandum G94/1/329 'Policy Regarding the Employment of Machine Guns', 18 June 1918, AWM27, item 303/239; and MGGS, HQ Fourth Army No MG23/19 'Organisation and Command of Machine Gun Battalions', 12 June 1918, AWM27, item 303/239.

[124] 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 29 March and 3 April 1918, AWM4, items 23/18/29–30; and Lt Col AM Ross (GSO1), HQ 1st Aust Div 'Training Memorandum No 4' to 1st, 2nd and 3rd inf bdes (AIF), 1st MG Bn (AIF) and 1st Pnr Bn (AIF), 23 October 1918, AWM27, item 304/53.

not unique within the 1st Division in conducting this type of review and all units looked to ways of improving training.[125]

By the spring of 1917 combined-arms training became a feature of divisional training. Although the disaster at Bullecourt had left the AIF particularly jaundiced against tanks, in preparation for the Amiens counterattack of August 1918 the Australian infantry battalions were sent down to the Tank Training School at Vaux where they were briefed and had the opportunity to train with the tanks that would later support them at Amiens. While the battalions of the 1st Division missed this opportunity, as soon as the division was pulled out of the line after Lihons it organised its own demonstrations. Additionally there was a concerted effort to promulgate the lessons learned during the recent corps operations, and the divisional intelligence staff made frequent appearances at units to lecture the troops on these.[126]

What the forgoing demonstrates is that although the BEF had an extensive training system in place, tactical innovation was still driven from the lower echelons of the army and the capture of these lessons remained something of a 'hit and miss' affair. Some formations were highly innovative and became more effective; others remained mediocre formations throughout their service—the difference was usually to be found in the quality of the commander.

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The training of the 1st Division before Gallipoli was undoubtedly hard but as Charles Bean notes it was nothing unique or special: 'it was simply the old British Army training.'[127] While a number of British observers commented on the high standard of training of the division in early 1915, this probably tells us

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[125] 1st Bn (AIF), 'Report on Minor Operation carried out by First Australian Infantry Battalion—11/7/1918', 23 July 1917, p 3, AWM4, item 23/18/31.

[126] 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 19 and 23 August 1918, AWM4, item 23/18/34; GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 17–20 August 1918, AWM4, item 1/42/43 part 1; GS HQ 1st Aust Div, Intelligence Summaries August 1918, AWM4, item 1/42/43 part 2 appendix 2; and GS HQ 1st Aust Div, 'First Australian Division. Notes and Lessons from Recent Fighting', 31 August 1918, AWM4, item 1/42/44 part 3 appendix 7.

[127] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 139.

something about the inadequacies of pre-war British Army training practices and little about the actual standard of the 1st Division. After Gallipoli, others were also quick to comment and a senior staff officer on Birdwood's HQ ANZAC noted 'that a better division than the 1st Australian had never gone to battle.'[128] These comments too must be treated with caution as they are probably influenced by the surprise at how well the 1st Division had done in its first operation given its very rough start.

From the time the 1st Division arrived in France it became the beneficiary of an increasing range of training facilities in Britain and France. Gradually a training infrastructure was built-up and individual and collective training received greater emphasis. By the latter half of 1917, 1st Division reinforcements were receiving anything up to six months training before they were sent to the front. At the same time weapon specialists, senior and junior leaders and staff officers were all attending various courses where new doctrine was taught and practised.

Complementing the corporate advances in training was the fortuitous appointment of Harold Walker as the division's commander. He was an experienced British officer who took a strong and personal interest in the training of his units, seizing whatever opportunities came his way, and enabling his subordinates to not only master new doctrine but also to begin to develop their own approach to war-fighting. This was to be fully realised in the final campaigns of 1918 when the 1st Division emerged as one of the premier combat formations on the Western Front. Just how important this training was and just how far the 1st Division had come can only be fully appreciated by turning back to the division's first operational test on Gallipoli.

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[128] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 139; and Legg, *The Gordon Bennett Story*, p 27.

CHAPTER 5

INTO BATTLE: OPERATIONS ON GALLIPOLI

While administration and training were important, each of these activities were only enablers to the 1st Division's primary role of engaging the enemy and winning battles. Gallipoli was the division's first such test. The division's campaign may be said to have commenced when it received orders for the move from Egypt on 2 April 1915 and concluded on 8 January 1916 when the division reassembled back in Egypt. The division's campaign lasted 282 days, with the majority of that time spent on the Peninsula (239 days), with only short periods at the beginning and end in Egypt (14 days), on the Mediterranean Islands off Gallipoli (six days), and at sea (23 days). Activities during this period included some administration (33 days mostly spent in transit) and just six days' training (all before the landings practicing landing drills), while the bulk of the time was committed to operations on the Peninsula (243 days).[1]

Although the 1st Division's operations on Gallipoli commenced with the now legendary landings and are well known for the severity of the fighting during the offensive in August, the reality is that these two periods lasted barely four weeks. The actual number of days the division attacked the enemy amounted to just five. Of the rest of the time, six days were spent reorganising and conducting battle procedure, while the remaining 232 days were spent on the defensive: holding the line (218 days), conducting reliefs-in-place (five days) and engaged in the withdraw that terminated the campaign (nine days).[2]

This chapter will explore the 1st Division's performance on Gallipoli. No attempt will be made to provide a full narrative history of the division's service on the Peninsula as this has been exhaustively covered in Bean's history and

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[1] It could be argued that the 1st Division's involvement in the campaign began earlier with the preliminary move of the 3rd Infantry Brigade in March but for this study the movement of the main body of the division has been used as the start point. GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, April 1915–January 1916, AWM4, items 1/42/3–1/42/12.

[2] Ibid.

numerous recent accounts.[3] Rather the focus will be on the divisional command and control system and how successfully its commanders, formations and units functioned under the pressure of combat. Ultimately it is battlefield performance that is the sole measure of a fighting organisation's success and it is against this criterion that the 1st Division's service must be measured.

THE PLAN

Given the ultimate failure of the Gallipoli campaign it is worth examining what was in the mind of the British planners and how they saw the campaign unfolding. Following the failed naval assault to force the Dardanelles in February and March 1915 the British strategic planners authorised a joint naval-military operation that called for General Sir Ian Hamilton's Mediterranean Expeditionary Force (MEF) to effect a lodgement on the Gallipoli Peninsula. This lodgement was to assist the Royal Navy to pass through the Dardanelles into the Sea of Marmara to threaten the Ottoman capital of Constantinople (Istanbul). It was believed that such an action would precipitate the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, knocking out one of Germany's allies and simultaneously taking pressure off the Russians. It was strategically imaginative, if operationally flawed in that the means to achieve such a grand aim were not available and would not be for another two-and-a-half decades.[4]

Hamilton's campaign plan called for the main landing to be made on the southern tip of the Peninsula at Cape Helles by the British 29th Division. Once ashore this division was to drive the Turks from the European side of the Dardanelles, clearing it of artillery and allowing the fleet to pass through the Narrows. While Helles was the main effort, it was to be supported by Birdwood's

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[3] Bean, *AOH*, Vols I and II, passim. For more recent accounts of the Gallipoli campaign see: James, *Gallipoli*, passim; Robin Prior, *Gallipoli: the end of the myth*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 2009; and Tim Travers, *Gallipoli 1915*, Tempus, Stroud, 2001. For accounts focussed primarily on the ANZAC operations see: John Robertson, *Anzac and Empire*, Hamlyn, Melbourne, 1990; Peter Williams, *The Battle of Anzac Ridge: An Anzac Victory 25 April 1915*, Australian Military History Publications, Loftus, 2007; David W Cameron, *25 April 1915: The day the Anzac legend was born,* Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2007; David W Cameron, *'Sorry, lads, but the order is to go': the August offensive, Gallipoli 1915,* UNSW Press, Sydney, 2009; and Les Carlyon, *Gallipoli*, Pan Macmillan, Sydney, 2001.

[4] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, pp 169–201; Prior, *Gallipoli*, pp 72–88; Hew Strachan, *The First World War*, Pocket Books, London, 2006, pp 113–117; and Williams, *The Battle of Anzac Ridge*, pp 14–19.

Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) landing 20 kilometres up the eastern shore just to the north of the promontory known as Gaba Tepe. This force, consisting of Bridges' 1st Australian Division and Godley's New Zealand and Australian (NZ&A) Division, was to seize the high ground behind the beach, repel any Turkish counterattacks, and if possible advance inland to the plateau of Mal Tepe, preventing reinforcements from moving south against the 29th Division. The Royal Naval Division was to assist with a demonstration against Bulair at the neck of the Peninsula, while the French 1st Colonial Division made a diversionary landing on the shores of Asia Minor.[5]

The problems with the planning for the campaign have been studied exhaustively. In essence the underlying problem was that both Hamilton and Birdwood almost exclusively focussed on just getting their troops ashore. Birdwood in particular gave little thought as to how operations were to be managed once a lodgement was secured and in this simple fact lays the seeds for the ANZAC failure.[6] Aside from Birdwood's emphatic instructions to his covering force to launch themselves inland as quickly as possible, his landing orders were vague on the conduct of subsequent operations. One of the enduring explanations for this omission is the supposed lack of material on which to plan. Hamilton claimed that all his planners had was a 1905 handbook on the Turkish Army and a map which was lacking detail and that was later reported to be inaccurate. Indeed Hamilton claimed that 'the Dardanelles and Bosphoros might be in the moon for all the military information I have got to go

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[5] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, pp 219–235; Travers, *Gallipoli 1915*, pp 47–48 and 66–68; and Williams, *The Battle of Anzac Ridge*, pp 19–31.

[6] Planning for Gallipoli shares some similarities with the D-Day landings 30 year later. While the Allies had several years to complete their planning for the Normandy landings, their focus was clearly on effecting the lodgement and considerably less thought was given to the crucial battles that were to be fought beyond the beaches. As a result the costly fighting in the hedgerows came as a surprise to most commanders and no special planning, equipment or training had been undertaken to deal with the problems. Here however, the similarities stop since Hamilton had roughly six weeks to plan and mount his operation while World War II experience demonstrated that at least six months was usually required to plan a major amphibious operation. Russell F Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaign of France and Germany, 1944–1945*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1981, pp 52–53; Michael D Doubler, *Closing With the Enemy: How GIs Fought in the War in Europe, 1944–1945*, University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, 1994, p 36; and Williams, *The Battle of Anzac Ridge*, p 21.

upon'.[7] The paucity of planning material is also said to have impacted on the 1st Division's plans.

Captain (later Lieutenant Colonel) Arthur Ross (Staff Captain 3rd Infantry Brigade AIF), left among his papers in the Australian War Memorial his Gallipoli map on which he wrote: 'All I had to work on to write the brigade landing order.'[8] While this appears a damming indictment of the British intelligence services, this is not correct. Orders for the operation were drafted and passed down from HQ MEF to HQ ANZAC, to HQ 1st Division and then to brigade, battalion and company. At each level the commander had to take the orders he received and re-work these so they would make sense to their subordinates. Superior orders and supplementary intelligence estimates actually provided Ross and the other divisional officers with a range of planning sources, of which their maps were just one. Despite subsequent claims, the maps available to the 1st Division were with only two exceptions reasonably accurate.[9] Intelligence on the Turkish forces opposing the landings was also largely complete and accurate.[10] What was less easy to evaluate, due to conflicting evidence, was the fighting capacity of the Turkish forces. It was a widely held, pre-landing assumption that the Turks were a third-rate enemy who would not stand against British troops—even colonial ones.[11]

To achieve his mission Bridges had his own division supported by the 7th (Indian) Mountain Artillery Brigade. His plan called for the covering force, comprising Colonel Ewan Sinclair-MacLagan's 3rd Infantry Brigade supported

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[7] Gen Sir Ian Hamilton, *Gallipoli Diary*, Vol I, Edward Arnold, London, 1920, p 14.

[8] Map, 'Gallipoli', sheet 2, 1:40,000, AWM4, item 23/3/3 part 1.

[9] Recent studies have concluded that the maps provided to the MEF were not as inaccurate as subsequently claimed and that any inaccuracies had little impact of the problems of the landings. See: Peter Chasseaud and Peter Doyle, *Grasping Gallipoli: Terrain, Maps and Failure at the Dardenelles, 1915*, Spellmount, Staplehurst, 2005; James, *Gallipoli*, p 80; Travers, *Gallipoli 1915*, pp 35–36; and Williams, *The Battle of Anzac Ridge*, pp 45–49, 52–53 and 58.

[10] Handbooks on the Turkish Army were passed down to battalion level and more up to date assessments on the capacity of the Turkish forces were also provided. Williams, *The Battle of Anzac Ridge*, pp 45–58; and Ivan D Chapman, *Iven G Mackay Citizen and Soldier*, Melway Publishing, Melbourne, 1975, pp 27 and 28.

[11] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, pp 165, 603 and 604; and James, *Gallipoli*, p 86.

by the 1st Field Company (AIF) and the bearer sub-divisions of the 3rd Field Ambulance (AIF), to land in the pre-dawn dark on the beach area between Gaba Tepe and Fisherman's Hut (labelled 'Z' Beach) and to secure Hill 971.[12] This feature dominates that part of the Peninsula but aside from the actual heights, two seaward spurs ran down to the southwest and were particularly important in covering the landing area. The Second Ridge (later named Anzac Ridge) was closer to the beach, while the Third Ridge was the 3rd Brigade's primary objective (later named Gun Ridge). Once the covering force had landed McCay's 2nd Brigade was to land and extend the Australian line up towards Hill 971. MacLaurin's 1st Brigade and the NZ&A Division would then follow on, with all of the landings behind the covering force being made from four offshore berths to land the troops at one of eight landing places.[13] Having assembled his corps Birdwood was to advance east, securing the Mal Tepe ridge in the centre of the Peninsula and cutting the roads that ran south and along which any Turkish reinforcements would have to travel.[14]

Bridges' plan hinged on the speedy landing of the covering force and the smooth disembarkation of the rest of his division. This was the only way he could build up his fighting strength ashore faster than the Turks could feed-in reinforcements. Success depended on sound joint staff work, good communications and the initiative of his subordinates. To manage the reception

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[12] It was Birdwood's decision to land in the dark because he was hoping to achieve some tactical surprise and he was apprehensive of the Turkish artillery and the Royal Navy's ability to silence it. Travers, *Gallipoli 1915*, p 67; Jonathan BA Bailey, *Field Artillery and Firepower*, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, pp 54–55; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, pp 220 and 223–224.

[13] The floating berths were designed by the CRE ANZAC, Colonel Joly de Lotbiniere. The piers could be locked together and anchored, and during their transport to the Peninsula they were ballasted with sealed tins of drinking water. Of the eight piers only one reached Mudros as most of the merchant ships tasked with towing them cut them loose. This not only impacted on the landing plans, depriving both sites of useful floating piers, it deprived the force of a total of 4000 gallons of potable water that would have been available immediately after the landings. GS 1st Aust Div, 'Operation Order No 1', 18 April 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/3 part 2 appendix 1; James, *Gallipoli*, p 90; and Travers, *Gallipoli 1915*, pp 68–72.

[14] Maj Gen W Braithwaite (CGS MEF), 'Instructions for GOC ANZAC', 13 April 1915, AWM4, item 1/25/1 part 5 appendix 1 (f); Lt Col CBB White (GSO1 1st Aust Div), 'Operation Order No 1', 18 April 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/3 part 2 appendix 1.

of the landing troops Major Duncan Glasfurd (GSO2 1st Division)[15] and Major Charles Villiers-Stuart (HQ ANZAC)[16] were to land with the covering force and select four 'Forming-Up-Places' and two 'Rendezvous'. The Forming-Up-Places were to be off the beaches where the scattered boatloads and platoons, which it was correctly anticipated would be disorganised and disorientated during the landing, could be reformed under their own commanders and once sub-unit groups were complete they were to be dispatched to the Rendezvous. At the Rendezvous units were to be reformed before being sent forward.[17] The essential beach control staff was under the command of the Military Landing Officer, Lieutenant Colonel William Lesslie (GSO2 HQ ANZAC) and he and his team were to land just behind Glasfurd, Villiers-Stuart and the covering force.[18]

Communications between ship and shore was to be through a naval base signal station that was to be established on the beach. Close to the signal station a central signal office was to be established by the Army HQ Signal Company and all communications inland from the beach was to pass through this office. From the central signal office Lesslie was to organise line and telephone communications forward to the Rendezvous. To avoid confusion between the friendly and enemy troops a supply of red and yellow flags was issued to units so that they could indicate their position to the ships. These could also be used to signal the ships when the troops wanted naval gunfire support ceased.[19]

The divisional medical arrangements were under the control of Colonel Neville Howse, who had superseded Charles Ryan as the division's Assistant Director

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[15] Duncan Glasfurd was an Indian-born, British regular who in 1912 was seconded to Australia as Director of Military Training. In August 1914 he was appointed GSO2 1st Division, serving in Egypt and on Gallipoli where he replaced Cyril Brudenell White as GSO1 when White fell sick. Following the withdrawal Glasfurd was promoted to command the newly formed 12th Infantry Brigade (AIF). He was mortally wounded at Flers in November 1916. Chris D Coulthard-Clark, 'Glasfurd, Duncan John (1873–1916)', *ADB*, Vol 9, pp 20–21.

[16] Charles Villiers-Stuart was a Scots-born, British regular who served on HQ ANZAC during the Gallipoli landings. He was killed on 17 May 1915. GWGC: Debt of Honour Database.

[17] Lt Col CBB White (GSO1 1st Aust Div), 'Disembarkation Orders', 18 April 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/3 part 2 appendix 2.

[18] William Lesslie later commanded the 1st Infantry Brigade (AIF) in France.

[19] Lt Col CBB White (GSO1 1st Aust Div), 'Operation Order No 1', 18 April 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/3 part 2 appendix 1.

Medical Services in December 1914. His plan called for the establishment of Number 1 Australian Casualty Clearing Station until such time as the tent subdivisions of the field ambulances could be landed. The navy was responsible for the transportation of the casualties from the beach to the offshore vessels, with the Hospital Ship *Gascon* being used for serious cases and lightly wounded being sent to the transport *Clan McGillivray*. The plan for the 1st Division landings was simple and it appeared sound in theory but it was optimistic, even as many of the key commanders were actually pessimistic about the chances of success.[20]

The training of the division before Gallipoli was covered in Chapter 4, in summary it was limited and lacking in realism. If the pre-Gallipoli exercises at Lemnos were meant to be mission rehearsals they only left many of the men understandably anxious. Most recognised the importance of this baptism of fire, even if most were fortunately too inexperienced to be truly daunted by the forthcoming operation. Private Tom Richards, an ex-international rugby player and Olympian, noted that: 'I don't feel the coming danger any more than I have felt anxious the night before an International football match.'[21] Others looked forward to the challenge ahead even though they had never faced the Lions as Richards had done. A 4th Battalion (AIF) soldier recorded on the eve of the landings: 'All the boys tonight are singing and are in great spirits, bayonets are sharpened and everything made ready for tomorrow'.[22] Whatever the outward manifestations of bravado, it can be assumed that all felt the tension and the enormity of the task ahead and none perhaps more than the divisional commander. Even the normally stoic Bridges must have felt some apprehension

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[20] Lt Col CBB White (GSO1 1st Aust Div), 'Operation Order No 1' and 'Disembarkation Orders', 18 April 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/3 part 2 appendices 1 and 2; and Travers, *Gallipoli 1915*, pp 46 and 67.

[21] LCpl T Richards (1st Fd Ambulance AIF), diary entry, 24 April 1915, quoted in Growden, *Gold, Mud 'N' Guts*, p 7.

[22] Sgt AL de Vine (4th Bn AIF), diary entry, 24 April 1915, AWM: 1DRL/0240.

on the dark night of 24 April as the transports sailed east and he and his raw division were about to face their first major test.[23]

The 1st Division's orders for the landings were issued as its 'Operation Order No 1' from the *Minnewaska*, the liner carrying HQ 1st Division, and were distributed one week before landings. The divisional staff also prepared a disembarkation order, which covered the details of the landing schedule, the transfer of personnel between ships, details of the beach control personnel and information on the forming-up-places and rendezvous. Sinclair-MacLagan also received his own separate one-page instruction.[24]

The passage of orders from Bridges down to the soldiers who had to execute the plan passed through five levels of command. In the first instance the GOC relied on his senior staff to draft the divisional orders and then at each succeeding level of command each formation, unit and sub-unit commander prepared their plans and orders. At each level the orders needed to be simple, clear and relevant, unfortunately this was not always the case and given the many variables most orders were necessarily broad, with much being left to the initiative of the unit COs responding to developments ashore.

At the bottom of the chain of command most junior leaders and soldiers felt that they were given precious little useful information.[25] Tom Richards went on to describe the brief given by his commander:

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[23] Bean recorded that while Sinclair-MacLagan was concerned with the difficulties, 'Bridges thought him pessimistic.' Later historians too have confused Sinclair-MacLagan's realistic, if bleak assessment with pessimism. On the other hand evidence suggests that far too many senior British officers displayed excessive optimism and ambition at this stage of the war: first, to protect their position; and second, to mask their inexperience and doubts. Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 222; Pedersen, *The Anzacs*, p 21; and Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914–1918*, pp 68–82.

[24] The orders were issued under Bridges authority but signed and issued by White. Lt Col CBB White (GSO1 1st Aust Div), 'Operation Order No 1' and 'Disembarkation Orders', 18 April 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/3 part 2 appendices 1 and 2; and Lt Col CBB White, 'Instructions to Officer Commanding Covering Force', 18 April 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/3 part 2 appendix 3.

[25] As an example of the quality of low-level orders, those for C Company, 2nd Battalion contain an extensive list of identified enemy positions and identifies the brigades first object but does not include a battalion mission or task and simply notes that there are '8 landing places between FISHERMAN's HUT and KABA TEPE'. 'Orders for Landing', 24 April 1915, AWM: Morshead papers, 3DRL 2632, item 3/1.

> *He gave particulars of numbers and battalions landing and what was expected of them. His speech was full of fine humour, dealing chiefly with our funky condition and likely fear. It was hardly the kind of speech one would expect on the eve of big doings, as there was plenty of ridicule, nonsense, but no hard facts or detailed information. It seemed more as through we were preparing for a pantomime instead of grim warfare. Don't mean for one moment that he should have made us melancholy and miserable, but he could have given us something like an idea of what to expect.*[26]

The reality is that this officer did not know himself and the lack of 'hard' information was only a reflection of the inexperience of most commanders and staff in the type of operation they faced.

THE LANDINGS

On the evening of 24 April 1915, after a 24-hour delay because of bad weather, the convoy carrying the ANZAC set sail from Lemnos. Through the night the ships sailed west to arrive at their assembly point off Imbros Island at about 8.00 pm before commencing their final run, navigating by 'dead-reckoning'. About 1.00 am on the morning of Sunday 25 April the battleships with the covering force—HMS *London*, *Prince of Wales* and *Queen*—reached their battle stations some eight kilometres west of Gaba Tepe. The covering force troops were roused, given a hot meal and embarked in the open boats that were to take them to the shore. Just before 3.00 am the three battleships steamed slowly towards the Peninsula, accompanied by 12 steam-driven pinnacles each towing a string of three boats packed with tense, silent soldiers. At 3.30 am the battleships came to a stop and the tows crept past them and headed towards the invisible shore, still about four kilometres away.[27]

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[26] LCpl T Richards (1st Fd Ambulance AIF), diary entry, quoted in Growden, *Gold, Mud 'N' Guts*, pp 134–135.

[27] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, pp 245–250; and James, *Gallipoli*, pp 96–97 and 102–103.

The lead waves of the 3rd Brigade began their run-in to the beach at about 4.30 am.[28] As they neared the beach keen observers noticed how the lead boats converged in the darkness and veered to the north. The first streaks of dawn were evident when the tows cast off some 50 metres from the shore and the 48 boats crept towards the beach. As the first boats neared the shore, a flare shot into the sky followed by the shouted warning of a Turkish sentry before a volley of rifle fire and machine-gun fire swept some of the leading boats.[29]

The intended landing site for the 3rd Brigade was a stretch of open beach to the north of Gaba Tepe designated as Z Beach and later known as Brighton Beach. The plan was for the brigade to clear the defenders at bayonet point before exploiting up the lower slopes of the Sari Bair feature, moving up the less steep slopes of its southern margins in order to reach the summit. Instead however, the first boats landed in a cluster roughly two kilometres farther north in a shallow cove later known as Anzac Cove. This stretch of the coast is more steep, the shore narrow and in the words of a recent history it was 'topographically challenging'.[30] Behind the stony beach the ground rose to an intermediate plateau, later known as Plugge's Plateau, before the ground dropped away into a series of gullies that were thickly vegetated with scrub. Beyond these gullies lay the second ridge, which led to the intended objective but the approaches from the northern landing site were difficult and in some places impossible to ascend.

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[28] Timings for the landings vary between 4.00 and 5.10 am with between 4.15 and 4.30 am being the most common. For example HQ ANZAC reported 4.30 am, HQ 1st Division and HQ 3rd Brigade reported 4.15 am, the 10th Battalion also reported 4.15 am, the 11th Battalion reported 4.30 am and the 12th Battalion recorded between 4.00 and 4.10 am. The 9th Batttalion did not list a time. Charles Bean went with 4.30 am. GS HQ ANZAC, War Diary, 25 April 1914, AWM4, item 1/25/1 part 1; Maj D Glasfurd (GSO2), 'Summary of Operations of 1st Australian Division from 25th April', 9 May 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/3 part 2; 3rd Inf Bde (AIF), War Diary, August 1914–June 1915, AWM4, item 23/3/1 part 2; 10th Bn (AIF), War Diary, 25 April 1915, AWM4, item 23/27/1; 11th Bn (AIF), War Diary, 25 April 1915, AWM4, item 23/28/2; 12th Bn (AIF), War Diary, 25 April 1915, AWM4, 23/29/2; Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 253; and Williams, *The Battle of Anzac Ridge*, p 85.

[29] Although a number of Australian witnesses stated that they were subject to Turkish machine-gun fire during the initial landings and these claims were supported by Bean's account in the official history, later research based on Turkish testimony refutes this. 10th Bn (AIF), War Diary, 25 April 1915, AWM4, item 23/27/2; Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, pp 250 and 252; James, *Gallipoli*, pp 103–104; Williams, *The Battle of Anzac Ridge*, pp 69–70; and Chris Roberts, 'Turkish Machine-guns at the Landings', *Wartime*, Issue 50, pp 14–19.

[30] Chasseaud and Doyle, *Grasping Gallipoli*, p 254.

Although it has long been claimed that the ANZAC landed in the wrong place the reality is that its orders were sufficiently vague to argue that this is not the case. The 1st Division's orders state that it was to land between Gaba Tepe and Fisherman's Hut and this is where the bulk of the troops did in fact land. Simply, too much faith was placed in the navy and its ability to land the force at night in exactly the anticipated location. As naval historian Tom Frame has observed, the difficulties of landing at night and the limitations of contemporary maritime navigation contributed to the initial waves making land at Anzac rather than across the broader beach to the south, even so the fact remains that the navy did what was expected of it and the landings did occur within the parameters set in the army plan.[31]

Despite the confusion caused by the northerly landings, the covering force effected its lodgement. Sinclair-MacLagan established his brigade in scattered groups along the second ridge and by 5.35 am units of the 2nd Brigade began landing at Anzac Cove. Originally McCay's brigade was to move up the second ridge and extend the 3rd Brigade's positions on Battleship Hill to the left up to Chunuck Bair and then to Hill 971. Major Walter Cass (Brigade Major 2nd Brigade) noted:

> *On reaching the beach there was a certain amount of confusion…The first ridge emphasised the necessity of discarding packs and then free of their loads the men moved on. But practically all semblance of company and battalion formation was lost.*[32]

In the absence of Bridges who had not yet landed, Sinclair-Maclagan, fearing a Turkish counterattack on his southern flank, directed McCay to push his brigade down to the right of the 3rd Brigade's fragmented line, rather than the left as called for in the original plan. Even after Bridges came ashore, as units landed

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[31] Tom Frame, *The Shores of Gallipoli: Naval Aspects of the Anzac Campaign*, Hale and Iremonger, Alexandria, 2000 pp 183–210; Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, pp 189–191; and Travers, *Gallipoli 1915*, pp 28–29, 35 and 47–48.

[32] Maj W Cass (2nd Bde AIF), quoted in Ron Austin, *Gallipoli: An Australian Encyclopaedia on the 1915 Dardanelles Campaign*, Slouch Hat Publications, McCrae, 2005, p 142.

piecemeal throughout the day they were thrown into the line wherever it was threatened. Although the bulk of the follow-on echelons landed intact, cohesion was lost and control collapsed in some units.[33] By 2.00 pm about 12,000 troops were ashore, facing about 5000 Turks. Then in the afternoon disembarkation was halted for four hours as the transports were forced to move further offshore because of Turkish artillery fire. By 5.00 pm the beachhead was fighting for its survival.[34]

Diary entries at the time of the landing, both official and personal, are generally sketchy as few had the time or energy to record details. As one 2nd Battalion officer noted in his diary, an entry only made on 4 May:

> *Landed North of Kaba Tepe* [sic]*. There is no need for me to enter to-day's events. It was a fight, if ever there was a fight. Many incidents and scenes will never fade.*

The next day: 'All mixed up. On left flank.' The following day: 'Hell on earth'.[35]

Almost every aspect of the plan went array. The troops did not land where they were they expected. The loss of the piers meant that the disembarkation sequence was slowed and units were landed when and where they could but rarely in accordance with the plan. Once ashore units and sub-units were dispatched inland as quickly as they arrived. The fighting was confused and bloody and the 1st Division was seriously out-gunned by their opponents.

It was at Birdwood's insistence that the ANZAC landings began in the pre-dawn darkness, mainly due to his well-founded fears of the Turkish artillery. Once there was sufficient daylight however, faith was placed in the ability of the navy to provide effective gunfire support. The problem was this too was ill founded.

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[33] Bridges landed with his HQ at Anzac Cove sometime between 6.00 am and 7:30 am and he immediately conducted a two-hour reconnaissance before setting up his HQ. Admin Staff HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 25 April 1915, AWM4, item 1/43/5; Coulthard-Clark, *A Heritage of Spirit*, p 163; and Bean, *Two Men I Knew*, pp 67–68.

[34] James, *Gallipoli*, p 111; Travers, *Gallipoli 1915*, pp 70–72; and Chris Roberts, 'The landing at ANZAC', *Journal of the Australian War Memorial*, Issue 22, pp 24–34.

[35] Capt L Morshead, diary entries, 25, 26 and 27 April 1915, AWM: Morshead papers, 3DRL 2632, item 3/1.

Lack of experience, the wrong type of shells and guns, and inadequate ship-to-shore communications all limited what the navy could achieve. As Tim Travers tellingly notes, before the naval operations commenced against the Turkish forts back in February, the navy had to improvise a 'simple signalling system, using a clock code'. This basic fact reflects the state of affairs whereby 'the Navy had done little indirect fire or high-angle fire before the war.'[36] In contrast the Australians endured a relatively heavy Turkish bombardment for most of the day and this not only inflicted casualties, it rattled the raw troops.

Matters might have been helped if some land-based artillery was available. The gallant gunners of the 7th Mountain Brigade did their best but they were unable to achieve much. Although the two batteries of the brigade were supposed to land on the morning on 25 April they were not able to secure transportation to the beach until late in the afternoon. Finally, Major AC Fergusson (OC 21st Mountain Battery) was able to set up positions in what became known as Shrapnel Gully and from there his tiny 10-pounder guns provided welcome assistance and moral support to the hard-pressed 2nd and 3rd battalions until the gunners were forced to withdraw due to casualties.[37]

While the topography around Anzac did not allow for the effective employment of the flat-trajectory 18-pounders, Bridges also appears to have been particularly fearful of losing any of his guns. When Hobbs finally managed to land the first 18-pounders at about 3.25 pm his orders were countermanded and the guns were re-embarked. Surprisingly the four New Zealand 4.5-inch howitzers, the only high-angle indirect-fire support weapons possessed by the ANZAC other than the Indian 10-pounders, were for some inexplicable reason not scheduled to land until the afternoon of the second day. Pressure on the

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[36] Travers, *Gallipoli 1915*, p 22.

[37] The 10-pounder, unlike more modern guns, had no recoil mechanism, necessitating the relaying of the gun after each round was fired. Ammunition for the gun was also a problem as its shrapnel shells broke-up at the wrong time, a fact known for 18 years, though still not fixed. Although there were some suspicions about the Indian's professional ability these appear to have been missfounded and the Anzacs eventually developed a close affinity with their Sikh and Punjabi gunners. Horner, *The Gunners*, p 92; Peter Stanley, 'An Entente…Most Remarkable', *Sabretache*, Vol 22, No 2 (April–June 1981) pp 18–19 and 21; and Travers, *Gallipoli 1915*, pp 73–74.

shallow enclave led to them being called forward urgently late on the day of the landings, although they were not actually put ashore until daylight on the morning of the second day.[38]

Lacking additional fire support, the Anzac infantry were forced to rely on themselves. The resulting battle for the beachhead was among the bloodiest fought by the 1st Division during the war. The 3rd Brigade suffered the highest losses with 1865, followed by the 2nd Brigade with 1681, and the 1st Brigade with 1385 casualties. Divisional casualties between 25 and 30 April amounted to nearly 5000 all ranks, including nearly 2000 missing.[39]

THE BEACHHEAD BATTLE IN RETROSPECT

Although the achievement of the novice 1st Division in securing a toe-hold on the Peninsula is worthy of acclamation, the fact remains that the division failed to achieve its mission of securing the heights of Sari Bair and Gun Ridge and it could not advance to Mal Tepe to cut the Peninsula in half. The reasons for the failure have been neatly summarised by Tim Travers:

> *loss of surprise; an incorrect landing place; the last-minute shift to the right flank orientation after the landing by Sinclair MacLagan; confusion in the difficult scrub country resulting in lack of cohesion, communication, discipline and direction; mediocre leadership in certain areas…; failure to land field artillery, leaving Anzac troops under demoralizing and continuous shrapnel fire; a stern baptism of fire for mostly untried troops; relative failure of naval supporting fire; the lengthy four-hour halt in the landing troops in the afternoon of 25 April; a reasonably quick Turkish response; and very effective Turkish shrapnel and sniper fire.* [40]

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[38] Coombes, *Lionheart*, pp 42–48; and Capt CG Dix, "'Anzac': Impressions of the Landing and 14 weeks work on the Beach', pp 16 and 17, AWM25, item 367/5.

[39] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, pp 536–537; and Robertson, *Anzac and Empire*, p 88.

[40] Travers, *Gallipoli 1915*, p 82.

Although the pre-landing intelligence assessment was that the Turk was a poor opponent, the reality was that the British underestimated their enemy in every quarter.[41] Although claims were made in the wake of the landings that the 1st Division initially faced three brigades of Turkish troops, the 3rd Brigade (AIF) in fact was opposed by only two well dug-in companies from a single battalion of the 27th Regiment, with a total strength of about 400 rifles supported by the fire of a single machine-gun company.[42] What the British underestimated was the resolve of their opponents who were defending their homeland, the courage of the Turkish soldier and the capacity of his commanders. The decisiveness of Lieutenant Colonel Mustafa Kemal in ordering the 19th Infantry Division to attack from the northeast and retake the high ground around Baby 700 and Battleship Hill was crucial in foiling any further advance by the 3rd Brigade and when combined with an earlier counterattack by the 27th Regiment against the southern part of the line, this simply threw the 1st Division's plan into disorder.[43]

It was Mustafa Kemal who stole the day. In what was the decisive manoeuvre on the first day of the campaign he intuitively sensed the strength of the Australian landings and seized the initiative, committing his division to battle without waiting for orders. He pushed his division forward, personally leading the 57th Infantry Regiment, and issuing his famous order: 'I do not expect you to attack, I order you to die.'[44] Although his performance is not as exemplary as some have claimed, he made fewer errors than his opponents and his inspired

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[41] Birdwood wrote immediately after the landings that '[t]he Turks all the time were fighting us like the Devil and we afterwards discovered we were opposed by three Brigades—and we found they had got trenches everywhere.' He would later recant this in the evidence he gave to the Dardanelles Commission acknowledging that '[l]ater on we knew that there were not great Turkish forces up there on the day of the landing'. Lt Gen W Birdwood, letter to wife, 29 April 1915; and Lt Gen W Birdwood, evidence to Dardanelles Commission, 6 March 1917, AWM: Birdwood papers, 3DRL 3376/40.

[42] As noted before there is dispute over the number of Turkish machine-guns covering the landing beaches. James, *Gallipoli*, p 108; Williams, *The Battle of Anzac Ridge*, pp 64–65; and Roberts, 'Turkish Machine-guns at the Landings', pp 14–19.

[43] For the controversy as whether the 3rd Brigade should or could have continued its advance to the Third Ridge in the morning of 25 April rather than halting on the Second Ridge see: Williams, *The Battle of Anzac Ridge*, especially chapter 6, pp 79–98.

[44] Edward J Erickson, *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War*, Greenwood Press, Westport, 2001, p 83; and Michael Hickey, *Gallipoli*, John Murray, London, 1995, p 119.

leadership tipped the battle in this single dramatic action.[45] This is one of those few occasions when a tactical commander's decision not only won the battle, it also had an immediate operational impact and long-term strategic implications.

On the other hand, Bridges and his subordinates were too optimistic in their planning, failing to appreciate what their inexperienced formation could achieve. This led directly to a loss of cohesion and virtual disintegration of the division when the plan came unstuck. Despite extravagant claims made by some writers on the prowess and achievements of the Australians on the day, the inevitable confusion on beaches and in the gullies behind left a lingering doubt in the minds of some observers over just how well the 1st Division had performed. This doubt was glossed over in the complimentary dispatches filed by correspondents such as Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett and Charles Bean, even though they did not even land on the beach that day. Other observers claimed that there was widespread confusion and malingering by leaderless soldiers and that the performance of the officers and soldiers was poor. Due to the requirements of the wartime censorship, any perceived shortcomings were papered over and the Anzac legend was born.[46]

The controversy over the performance of the 1st Division was left to lie during the war only to be reignited in 1926 when the Historical Section, which was responsible for the *British Official History*, sent copies of Cecil Aspinall's draft chapters about the Gallipoli landings to Australia for comment. According to Aspinall, one of the British staff who had helped to plan the landings, the initial landing was relatively easy and successful but by the afternoon confusion among the Australians prevented any coordinated operations, which could have secured their objectives. Moreover by late afternoon the 'severe strain to young and untried troops in their first day of battle' was beginning to tell. 'For many the

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[45] Turkish General Staff, *A Brief History of the Canakkale Campaign of the First World War (June 1914–January 1916)*, The Turkish General Staff Directorate of Military History and Strategic Studies and Directorate of Inspection Publications, Ankara, 2004, pp 71–72; and Harvey Broadbent, 'Gallipoli's first day', *Wartime*, Issue 46, pp 44–47.

[46] Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett's account of the landing, published in Australia on 8 May 1915, did much to begin the legend of the Anzac landings. Fred Brenchley and Elizabeth Brenchley, *Myth Maker: Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett The Englishman Who Sparked Australia's Gallipoli Legend*, John Wiley and Sons Australia, Milton, 2005, pp 1–12.

breaking point had now been passed, and numbers of unwounded men were filtering back to the beach in an endless stream' so that 'the gullies in the rear were choked with stragglers and men who had lost their way'.[47] The draft caused a furore in Australia and the resulting exchange of correspondence between Australia and Britain led to the draft being amended to remove the harsher criticism. According to Aspinall he had found that particular chapter on the Anzac landings:

> *…a difficult one to write because the truth about the Australians has never yet been told and in its absence a myth has sprung up that the Anzac troops did magnificently against amazing odds… The draft, except in one quarter, met with entire approval. Sir Ian Hamilton, Sir W. Birdwood, General Sinclair MacLagan (who commanded the Covering Force)…, the Admiralty, the New Zealand Govt. & War Office, all saw it & approved it without comment, and even General Edmonds himself pronounced it as 'excellent'. Col. Daniel [of the Foreign Office] also approved it. The one exception was the Australian Govt., who asked to have various amendments made. Some of these amendments were fair, others were at the expense of historical accuracy; but in the new draft every word that was objected to by the Australians has been expunged…*[48]

Aspinall did not go public with his concerns but he raises a number of issues about the recording of the AIF's history. The individuals and organisations that Aspinall cites were not in any position to comment on the Anzac straggling issue except for Sinclair-MacLagan who was fully occupied controlling his brigade on the second ridge. None of the others were even on the beach on 25 April however, there were those who were in a position to observe first-hand. Major Herbert Wallis, a British regular who was Staff Captain 2nd Infantry Brigade AIF, saw for himself the conditions in the gullies and on the beach,

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[47] Cecil Aspinall quoted in Alistair Thomson," History and 'Betrayal': The Anzac Controversy", *History* Today, No 43 (January 1993) p 8.

[48] Ibid, p 10.

describing 25 April as a 'tragic day' of 'chaos'.[49] Indeed, Sinclair-MacLagan offered his views on what he termed the 'general disintegration' of his infantry, ascribing this to the broken country that forced the infantry to move in single file, the rapidity of the initial advance, and the necessity of pushing small units into the line to relieve pressure on points weakly held.[50]

Charles Bean, on the other hand, relied almost exclusively on comments from senior Australian officers to refute Aspinall's claims. Even so not all AIF officers were so congratulatory in their comments on the division's performance. The division's head gunner, Colonel Talbot Hobbs, wrote after the war how he 'could not help being depressed at the streams of wounded and the number of stragglers, making their way to the beach, already congested with wounded'.[51]

While British officers, including Cecil Aspinall, had a vested interest in explaining away the failure of the campaign, Australian officers who had commanded at the landings had an equally vested interest in denying the British accusations. The truth is indeed a matter of perception. British regulars were more inclined to see colonial troops, particularly unruly ones such as the Australians, with less favourable eyes; and Australian commanders were more inclined to see their men in a positive light, especially after the eulogistic pronouncements printed later. The truth was to be found on the Peninsula in the late noon of 25 April 1915 and it is not possible to discover today. What we can do is sift through the evidence and try and make a reasoned assessment.

British claims of endless streams of stragglers are probably an exaggeration although the problem was serious. By late afternoon the heavy casualties among the senior and junior commanders had left many troops leaderless and there were probably up to 1000 stragglers among the hundreds of wounded lying on the beach. Perhaps up to another 1000 stragglers were also in the

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[49] Ibid.

[50] Maj D Glasfurd (GSO2 HQ 1st Aust Div), 'Summary of Operations of 1st Australian Division from 25th April', 9 May 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/3 part 2.

[51] Sir Talbot Hobbs, 'A Gunner's Reflections: Gallipoli Campaign', *Reveille*, 31 March 1932, quoted in PC Firkins, 'Sir JJ Talbot Hobbs: The General', in Lyall Hunt (ed), *Westralian Portraits*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1979, p 154.

gullies behind the line. Some may have been avoiding the firing line, having become demoralised by the Turkish fire, while others may simply have lost their unit and were looking for someone to direct them. The collapse of command and control meant that many would not find their units for several days and it was not just the soldier's training that was found wanting.[52]

While many of the officers rose to the occasion and provided leadership, suffering a disproportionately high casualty rate in the process, others had their inexperience cruelly exposed. While no one could doubt Bridges' personal courage, he was a difficult leader, and this led to some of his directions being badly executed and his support of the early suggestion to abandon the landings smacks of panic.[53] Sinclair-MacLagan did well under trying conditions and his performance justifies Bridges confidence in him although there is the lingering perception that his realignment of the line in the morning undid the plan and squandered any chance for success. Bean is largely silent on MacLaurin who was killed on the day of the landings. McCay appears to have been adequate even if his behaviour at the landings and later at Krithia led to him being regarded as 'the most disliked general' in the AIF.[54] In Egypt Bridges had wanted to replace him and although he appears to have overcome his reputation as a difficult subordinate, he was widely regarded by his men as a martinet who cared little for their welfare.[55] Talbot Hobbs also did his best with a bad situation, suffering constant disagreements with Birdwood and Bridges over the employment of the artillery but he must also bear some of the responsibility for the failure to get his guns into action earlier on 25 April.[56]

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[52] Bean thought that there were at least 1000 men on the beach alone while Lieutenant Dawkins (1st Fd Coy AIF) suggested somewhere between 600 and 1000. Williams suggests that another 1000 were probably in the gullies behind the line. CEW Bean, *Gallipoli Mission*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1948, p 74; Ingle, *From Duntroon to the Dardanelles*, p 156; and Williams, *The Battle of Anzac Ridge*, p 117.

[53] On 26 April, Bridges ordered the 4th Battalion to adjust its line but confusion over his intent led to disaster and the decimation of the battalion for no appreciable gain. Coulthard-Clark, *A Heritage of Spirit*, p 163; Bean, *Two Men I Knew*, pp 67–68; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 69.

[54] Charles Bean, quoted in Wray, *Sir James Whiteside McCay*, p 217.

[55] Wray, *Sir James Whiteside McCay*, pp 103, 105 and 201.

[56] Coombs, *The Lionheart*, pp 42, 44 and 66.

Once ashore the early fighting was largely a battalion and company commander's fight since the senior commanders lacked the means to coordinate their efforts. Here a number of the COs proved to be poor choices. Bridges had already relieved James Semmes in Egypt because of his chronic poor health—perhaps he should have been more ruthless. Harry Lee went back to the beach soon after landing, leaving his men scattered and leaderless. A similar inadequacy was seen in David Wanliss, while Leonard Dobbin is rarely mentioned in either official or unit histories, leaving the suspicion that his performance was also barely adequate.[57] It was a harsh introduction to the war and they all paid a price.[58]

Not only did the division suffer heavy casualties from the enemy, its inexperience is also evident in the significant number of Australian troops who fell victim to friendly fire. The best-known fratricide in the days following the landings involved the accidental shooting of the CO of the 2nd Battalion (AIF) however, he was only the most senior Australian killed by his own men and similar incidents occurred up and down the line.[59]

Likewise many of the junior leaders rose to the occasion while others proved indifferent or worse. A soldier in the 7th Battalion (AIF) was probably closest to the truth when he lamented:

> *Our officers were too inexperienced, we had not enough training, and not enough information was given to the troops as to what was*

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[57] Col C Rosenthal (CO 3rd FA Bde AIF), diary entry, 25 April 1915, SLNSW: MS2739; Travers, *Gallipoli 1915*, pp 71; Ashley Ekins, 'Exploding the Myths of Gallipoli, *The Bulletin*, Vol 122, No 6418 (27 April 2004) p 33; Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 387 and Vol II, p 88; and Stacy, *The History of the First Battalion*, pp 36–37 and 40.

[58] Of the original 1st Division infantry COs only 'Pompey' Elliott was promoted to brigade command and that was after Gallipoli. Of the others, two were killed in action (Astley Thompson and Lancelot Clarke); one was accidentally killed (George Braund); and two others were wounded in the course of their service. Conversely, seven were eventually invalided back to Australia for health reasons (Leonard Dobbin, Robert Owen, David Wanliss, James Semmes, William Bolton, Henry Lee, Stanley Weir and James Johnston). Stanley Weir was the exception and he only left the AIF after exceptional and lengthy service. Most of his peers however, collapsed in the weeks following the landings.

[59] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 599 fn32; and James, *Gallipoli*, p 178. For other incidents see: GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 4 May 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/4 part 1; Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, pp 598–599; and Austin, *As Rough As Bags*, pp 75 and 77.

> *expected of them once they got ashore. There were no rallying points, and it was each man for himself for the first two or three days.*[60]

By the third day the men of the 1st Division were beginning to show physical signs of exhaustion and were succumbing to the continuous strain and lack of sleep. As early as the morning of 27 April a clerk at divisional HQ noted:

> *I had quite a busy time working. Shell fire had ceased but bullets continued to whistle overhead. The night was made more trying by the false alarms of an officer who had, as a result of overwork, had a nervous breakdown.*

On the following day he noted that 'an officer came to DHQ, arm in sling and face one mass of shrapnel wounds, but still anxious to go on.'[61] This officer was the redoubtable Major (later Lieutenant Colonel) Ernest Brown, 'Dad' Owen's right-hand man in the 3rd Battalion (AIF). Although 'an old Australian soldier of iron nerve' Brown began hallucinating, claiming that he could see a Turkish sniper beside him in the same trench.[62]

Popular accounts stress the strain on the soldiers, while they frequently miss the crisis among the leaders of the division, especially the senior commanders and their staffs. For these officers the burden of command was particularly hard as the majority lacked operational experience, had only limited training and many were simply too old.[63] Most obviously this was seen in Bridges' calls to abandon the beachhead and some of his other dubious tactical directions, however even the senior staff felt the strain. Colonel William 'Bung' Patterson

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[60] Pte L Pennefather (7th Bn AIF), quoted in Austin, *Our Dear Old Battalion*, p 72.

[61] Treloar, *An Anzac Diary*, pp 126 and 127.

[62] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 531.

[63] Lancelot Clarke (aged 56) was the oldest of the original unit commanders, while Harold 'Pompey' Elliott (36) was the youngest. Other elderly COs include Robert Owen (52), David Wanliss (50), William Bolton (52), James Johnston (51), Oliver Tunbridge (52), Bernard Newmarch (58), Alfred Sturdee (51), and Alfred Sutton (51). Most of these men were older than their brigade commanders, with McCay the oldest at 49, MacLaurin the youngest at 35, and Sinclair-MacLagan was 45. Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, pp 49–50.

(AAQMG) landed on the Peninsula but 'collapsed & nearly went off his head on the second night.'[64] In fact his subordinates, John Gellibrand (DAQMG) and William Smith (APM) had to keep guard over him, as he had been observed earlier 'hunting around with a revolver in his hand looking for General Bridges to shoot him.' Patterson was evacuated on 27 April.[65]

On the other hand the landings saw the emergence of a new generation of younger, stauncher commanders, and while many were killed during the landings the survivors provided the nucleus for the next generation of regimental leaders. So even as the landing operations fragmented, higher-level cohesion unravelled and straggling became prevalent, the division fought on. Regimental leaders such as Henry Gordon Bennett, Joseph Lalor, Noel Louitt, Ivor Margetts, John Peck, Ralph Prisk, and Eric Tulloch rose to the occasion, advancing inland to seize their objectives and around them gathered soldiers who were only looking for a leader.[66] As one soldier later recalled his perception of the crisis in senior command:

> *Bridges, Godley or White could have ascertained the condition of the troops by a 15-minute walk to the line at Steele's or Courtney's Posts—both pretty hot centres—where demoralisation of the troops was completely non-existent. None did so. They permitted*

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[64] Lt Col CBB White (GSO1), diary entry, 2 May 1915, SLV: MS824, Box 877, Diary 1915.

[65] Copy of letter to Col AG Butler, 4 May 1931, AWM41, item 279; AWM182, item 2B; and Admin Staff HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 27 April 1915, item AWM4, item 1/43/5.

[66] Bennett later commanded the 6th Battalion (AIF) and rose to command the 3rd Infantry Brigade as one of the youngest brigadiers in the British Army. Lalor took temporary command of the 12th Battalion (AIF) after Lancelot Clarke was killed, although he too was killed later on the day of the landings. Louitt commanded the 45th Battalion (AIF) on the Western Front and was awarded the DSO and Bar. Margetts was killed at Pozières in 1916 serving as a company commander with the 12th Battalion (AIF). Peck was judged by Charles Bean 'one of the best officers in the AIF'. Prisk, who became Bennett's most trusted subordinate in the 6th Battalion, was badly wounded at German Officers' Trench during the August offensive. Tulloch was wounded on the day of the landings and later served on the Western Front where he was awarded the MC and Bar and temporarily commanded the 12th Battalion (AIF). Bennett: AB Lodge, 'Bennett, Henry Gordon (1887–1962)', *ADB*, Vol 13, pp 165–167. Lalor: Newton, *The Story of the Twelfth*, pp 27, 29, 44, 45 and 51 and NAA: B2455, file LALOR JOSEPH PETER. Loutit: NAA: B2455, file LOUTIT NOEL MEDWAY and Kearney, *Silent Voices*, pp 85–87, 88, 91, 93, 96 and 285. Peck: AJ Hill, 'Peck, John Henry', *ADB*, Vol 11, pp 189–190 and Bean, *AOH*, Vol IV, p 657. Prisk: NAA: B2455, file PRISK RALPH CARLYLE GEOFFREY, and Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, pp 602–603; Tullock: PA Dane, 'Tulloch, Eric William (1883–1926)', *ADB*, Vol 12, pp 282–283 and NAA: B2455, file TULLOCH ERIC WILLIAM.

> *themselves to be dominated by the fears generated during the day's tension in the relative security of headquarters by the reports of returning wounded…if there was any demoralisation at ANZAC that night it was in their own headquarters.*[67]

While we should treat the post-war judgments of a lance corporal upon his superiors with some healthy scepticism, his observations are in part correct.

In the end the 1st Division landings were, like the Battle of Waterloo, a 'close run thing'. It was not close in the conventional sense however, where it is commonly held that an ANZAC victory was only narrowly missed. Rather it was the ANZAC that narrowly avoided a complete catastrophe. Limon von Sanders' plan of holding the coastline with minimal forces and retaining the bulk of his troops in reserve for an immediate counterattack was based on the erroneous presumption of the Royal Navy's firepower supremacy. Given the relative ineffectiveness of ship-borne gunnery and the degree of confusion generated at Anzac by only three Turkish companies, it is interesting (if ultimately fallacious) to speculate on what might have happened if he held the beaches in strength. Given the heavy casualties that did occur both at Anzac and Helles when opposed by only relatively weak opposition, it is not inconceivable that both landings could have failed against stronger beach defences.

Ultimately the failure of the 1st Division to secure its objectives can only be blamed on the Turks—the Australians lost because the Turks won. And the 1st Division could probably never have won given its technical, tactical and practical limitations: the limitations of the contemporary communications meant that Bridges struggled from the outset to control and coordinate his force in the fractured terrain, a lack of indirect fire support left the fighting largely to man and bayonet, and the inadequacy of its early training regime meant that many leaders and soldiers were not prepared for the shock of battle. At the end of that bloody day, it was the inadequacy of means to match ends that proved the

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[67] Ex-LCpl H Howe (ex-11th Bn AIF), letter to A Bazley, 24 November 1963, AWM: Bazley papers, 3DRL/3520, quoted in Pedersen, *The Anzacs*, p 69.

division's undoing and this was common not only on Gallipoli; it is the same reason why most British attacks in 1915 failed.[68]

HOLDING THE BEACHHEAD

The precarious state of the beachhead on the evening of 25 April led to a crisis of confidence among the senior commanders. Bridges, Godley and Birdwood all pressed Hamilton recommending that they re-embark their forces. Hamilton, on the advice of the navy, refused and ordered the ANZAC to 'dig, dig and dig until you are safe'.[69] The fragmented crust of troops began to deepen and extend their shallow shell scrapes until they began linking-up to form a thin disorganised line.

Once the foothold had been established it was necessary to reorganise the units and formations that had been scattered and intermingled during the landings. On 29 April the Marine Brigade (part of the Royal Naval Division) took over part of the Anzac line to allow Bridges to withdraw the 1st and 3rd brigades and reorganise. Orders were drafted by Brudenell White and released at about 12.00 pm that day but things did not go smoothly and at 8.00 pm White issued a further order modifying the changeover. Only gradually would the division learn the importance of sound, realistic staff work and how to conduct a smooth relief-in-place.[70]

Coordination remained poor for some time and even something as simple as the necessity for maintaining a common time was not fully appreciated. A lack of punctuality was noted during the division's training in Egypt and it was

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[68] David Leeson attributes the failure of the British First Army in its early offensives on the Western Front to 'two inescapable technical handicaps: the weakness of its offensive weapons, and the inefficiency of its signal system.' David M Leeson, 'An Ecstasy of Fumbling: A Reassessment of the British Offensives on the Western Front, 1915', MA Thesis, University of Regina, 1998, p i.

[69] Hamilton to Birdwood quoted in Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 461.

[70] HQ 1st Aust Div, Operation Orders No 2 and No 3, 29 April 1915, AWM: Gellibrand papers, 3DRL 1473, item 94.

identified that some officers' watches did not conform to 'divisional time'.[71] This might seem surprising however in the early twentieth century a number of the commonly accepted military planning conventions had yet to be established and uniformly adopted. It was only on 12 June, more than a fortnight after the landings, that the MEF adopted the Royal Navy convention of the 24-hour clock system.[72] Unable to even keep common time, it was always going to be difficult, if not impossible, to effectively coordinate operations.

Once the reorganisation was complete Godley's NZ&A Division held the northern half of the ANZAC line facing Baby 700—the crucial high ground that dominates that part of the Peninsula. The 1st Division held the lower half of the line from Steele's Post south along the Second Ridge, across the 400 Plateau, and along Bolton's Ridge to anchor the right, seaward flank. In the 1st Division's sector its three infantry brigades each held a sub-sector until the 2nd Brigade was warned for a move south to Helles in early May when a further realignment took place and its sector was divided between the two remaining brigades. Gradually the trenches were further deepened and developed and where the topography allowed, a support line was constructed. While the 1st Division may have not been able to push forward, the Turks soon learned that they were equally incapable of driving their opponents into the sea.[73]

On only three occasions during the campaign did the Turks undertake serious attacks against the 1st Division's line. The first occasion saw attacks launched in the wake of the landings, leading to the see-saw movement of the front until it settled into stalemate as both sides dug-in, exhausted. It was during this period that Brigadier General Harold Walker, temporarily commanding the 1st Infantry Brigade (AIF) after the death of MacLaurin, first came to the attention of the 1st Division. On 30 April when Birdwood ordered an offensive to improve the precarious ANZAC line, Walker advised Bridges that the operation was hopeless and on this advice Bridges argued to withhold the 1st Division from

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[71] 'Notes upon the route march carried out on Tuesday 19th January 1915', issued with Divisional Order No 326, 21 January 1915, AWM: Gellibrand papers, 3DRL 1473, item 93.

[72] HQ 1st Aust Div, Div Orders No 148, 12 June 1915, AWM27, item 352/17.

[73] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 4 May 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/4 part 1.

the attack. Godley's enthusiasm was unabated and on 2 May his NZ&A Division suffered another bloody repulse. This would not be the last time Walker saved his men from an ill-conceived operation that bore little chance of success.[74]

Two weeks later an event of profound significance altered the course of the 1st Division's history. During his 15 May daily reconnaissance of the line, Bridges was hit in the groin by a sniper's bullet, severing his femoral artery. On 18 May he was evacuated to the Hospital Ship *Gascon*. His condition deteriorated, infection set in and although amputation of the leg was considered, this was ruled-out as he had lost a great deal of blood. Birdwood went to visit him and tried to cheer him but it appears that he knew there was little hope of his survival. On the same day he was made a Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath (KCB), becoming the first Australian general to earn a knighthood. Bridges died on 19 May and his body was eventually returned to Australia and buried at RMC-A, Duntroon.[75]

Although Bridges was a not a complete success as a divisional commander and his relationship with his staff (expect for White) and commanders was usually characterised by antipathy, he did share the hardships of Anzac with his men. He conducted daily tours to inspect the position and in doing so set an example which had a lasting impact on the expected behaviour of 1st Division's officers.[76]

To replace Bridges, Birdwood appointed Harold Walker, his old Indian Army subordinate who was still commanding the 1st Brigade. Described by his superior as 'a fine fighting soldier', the selection of Walker was an inspired one.[77] Originally Birdwood's chief of staff, Walker had delegated most of his staff duties in Egypt so that he could focus on the training of the corps.

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[74] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 583.

[75] Chris D Coulthard-Clark, 'Bridges, Sir William Throsby (1861–1915)', *ADB*, Vol 7, pp 408–411.

[76] Letter to Col Arthur Butler, 4 May 1931, AWM41, item 279; Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 485; and AWM182, item 2B.

[77] William Birdwood, *Khaki and Gown: An Autobiography*, Ward, Lock and Company, London, 1941, pp 240 and 264.

Physically brave, he 'from the first was to throw himself into the fighting'.[78] He also possessed the moral courage to express his opinions no matter how senior the audience and he was prepared to argue against any operation he thought risked his men's lives without a fair chance of success. His command of the 1st Division was to be long and generally happy, and it began with the defeat of the next major Turkish attack.[79]

The second attempt by the Turks to crush the beachhead occurred on the day after Bridges was evacuated. On 10 May the Turkish 2nd Infantry Division was brought forward from the Constantinople garrison, while the 3rd Infantry Division was brought over from the Asiatic shore. During the early hours of 19 May these two divisions launched an attack along the ANZAC line. Unfortunately for the Turks the allies had been warned by aerial reconnaissance and by observing preparations in the opposing front-line. Although the Turks threw 42,000 men into the attack beginning at 3.00 am, by dawn it was all over. The ANZAC, with just 17,000 men of which about 12,500 were holding the line, easily repulsed the assault and it was a largely one-sided defeat. The attackers suffered over 13,000 casualties, including 3000 dead and the majority of these fell to the ANZAC infantry, with the artillery playing a minor role.[80] Friendly casualties amounted to 160 killed and 468 wounded. If either side needed a lesson in the superiority of the defence, this attack proved conclusively that the numerical odds of 'three to one', traditionally deemed necessary for a successful assault, had been swept away by the power of the rifle and machine-gun and unless the

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[78] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 123.

[79] Walker was briefly superseded by James Legge in late June 1915 although Birdwood quickly arranged for the unpopular Australian to be sent back to Egypt to take command of the 2nd Australian Division. Returning to command in July, Walker led the division through the August offensive until he was badly wounded in late September, only returning to command in March 1916. James, *Gallipoli*, pp 82, 129fn and 242; AJ Sweeting, 'Walker, Sir Harold Bridgwood (1862–1934)', *ADB*, Vol 12, p 359.

[80] While the ANZAC gunners fired 143 howitzer shells, 1361 18-pounder shells and 1410 10-pounder shells during the attack, the infantry fired an estimated 948,000 rounds of small arms ammunition. GS HQ ANZAC, War Diary, 19 May 1915, AWM4, item 1/25/2 part 1.

odds could be extended with suppressing firepower there was little point in pitting men against bullets.[81]

Turkish accounts note that the failure of the 19 May attack was primarily due to flanking machine-gun fire and this assessment is supported by the 1st Division's own accounts. Six weeks later the Turks attacked again and between 28 June and 5 July the Fifth Army lost 16,000 men, about 14,000 in the Anzac sector. Never again in this campaign would the Turks attempt such an ambitious offensive.[82]

Although slow to appreciate the importance of the machine-gun, once the 1st Division's commanders gained confidence in their ability to dominate no-man's-land they also began to thin out their front-line trenches. It was initially held as a kind of mantra that the trenches had to be garrisoned with large numbers of riflemen ready to repel any sudden sally by the enemy. Reluctance to abandon this approach is understandable given the lack of depth at Anzac and the inability to fall back to reserve positions but it quickly became apparent that it was wasteful to crowd the forward trenches with soldiers as this only gave the illusion of safety. In fact the use of flanking machine-guns and increasing quantities of grenades meant that fewer soldiers could still hold the line safely without the need for crowding. Gradually the 1st Division's commanders began to see the advantages of holding positions with firepower rather than men. This was the beginning of the 1st Division's own minor military revolution.[83]

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[81] Estimates of Turkish casualties vary with the Turks admitting to 10,000 casualties of which about 3000 were fatalities but allied estimates vary from 10,000 to 13,000. Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, pp 160–161; James, *Gallipoli*, pp 183–185; Robertson, *Anzac and Empire*, pp 93–94; and Travers, *Gallipoli*, p 86. For the service of the 2nd and 3rd divisions see: Erickson, *Ordered to Die*, pp 12, 54, 63, 81, 84–85, 87–88, 90, 128, 150, 152–153, 155, 161, 163, 172 and 176.

[82] Turkish General Staff, *A Brief History of the Canakkale Campaign in the First World War (June 1914–January 1915)*, pp 91 and 93; and Erickson, *Ordered to Die*, p 89.

[83] The tendency to crowd trenches was common to all armies. The German commander General Erich von Falkenhayn was opposed the thinning-out of the German lines on psychological grounds and he maintained this doctrine until he was replaced in the late summer of 1916. Graham C Wynne, *If Germany Attacks: The Battle in Depth in the West*, Greenwood Press, Westport, 1976; 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 25 July and 7 and 8 August 1915, AWM4, items 23/18/2 and 23/18/3.

Following the defeat of the Turkish counterattack the ANZAC line continued to develop. At first, with the absence of the 2nd Brigade, the 1st Division's sector remained divided into two sections with the 1st Brigade holding the Number 2 Section in the north and the 3rd Brigade holding Number 1 Section in the south. In the middle of May the division was reinforced with the arrival of the 2nd LH Brigade and its own 4th LH Regiment, which were shipped to the Peninsula to operate in the dismounted role. Although smaller than the infantry brigades, the additional brigade allowed the division to divide its front further. From mid-June, after a period of acclimatisation, the light horse were able to take over half of the 3rd Brigade section. From late June the 1st Division's line was reorganised into two sectors (Numbers I and II), each of which was subdivided into two sub-sectors (a north and south). Each sub-sector became the responsibility of a brigade and from north to south they ran from Steele's Post along the Second Ridge with the 2nd Infantry Brigade holding the line opposite German Officers' Trench, the 1st Brigade opposite Johnston's Jolly and Lone Pine on the 400 Plateau, the 3rd Brigade along Bolton's Ridge facing Sniper Ridge across the Valley of Despair, and the 2nd LH Brigade, with the 4th LH Regiment, along the lower slopes of Bolton's Ridge on the southern end of the line.[84]

The defences scratched hastily in the first days following the landings gradually evolved into a system of trenches three deep. The first line was the fire trench, which in most of the 1st Division's sector followed the forward slope of the Second Ridge. About 20 metres behind the fire trench was the support line and behind this, where the topography allowed, the reserve trenches. The three lines were connected by communications trenches. This system was based loosely on pre-war British doctrine in *Field Service Regulations* in the section devoted to 'siege operations'. Brigade sub-sectors were further divided into battalion sectors with each company of the battalion responsible for about 65 metres of front, occupying each line in turn for 24 hours with a platoon and a

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[84] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, 'Map of the Situation 1st Australian Division', 9 June 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/5 part 4; Lt Col CBB White (GSO1), HQ 1st Aust Div Memorandum G851 to OC 3rd Inf Bde (AIF), 15 June 1915, AWM4, 1/42/5 part 7 appendix 2; GS HQ 1st Aust Div, 'Map of the Situation 1st Australian Division', 30 June 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/5 part 11; GS HQ 1st Aust Div, 'Map of the Situation 1st Australian Division', 3 July 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/6 part 2; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, pp 44, 47–48 and 294.

section. Thus, in a three-day period, each man in the company would have about 24 hours in the front line, 24 hours in support and 24 hours in reserve.[85]

The supports, also wearing equipment by day and night, performed any work necessary in the firing line and reinforced it in time of attack. The reserves did not have to wear equipment, their job being essentially to supply fatigue parties to carry water, mail, rations, ammunition, and other supplies from the beach to the front line. Rarely however, were there sufficient men in the reserves to undertake all the necessary carrying and other duties, and the supports were often called upon to make up the difference.[86] One soldier summarised life on Gallipoli under three headings, 'fighting, digging, carrying, popular opinion setting out their relative merits in that order'.[87]

As well as rotating in and out of the line, from late June battalions were withdrawn from the Peninsula to Imbros for a short rest. The first of these rotations involved the 1st Battalion, which on 27 June was warned that it would be required to move at short notice to embark. Two nights later the battalion filed down to Signal Pier and embarked. Thereafter units were regularly withdrawn for short breaks off the Peninsula.[88] Not until September however, with the arrival of the 2nd Australian Division, was the 1st Division able to sidestep to the right, handing over its positions at Lone Pine to the newcomers. This allowed its battered units further rest and the opportunity to institute a more regular system of reliefs but the division, as a formation, was continuously on the Peninsula from the very beginning to the withdrawal.[89]

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[85] Where the topography did not allow for reserve trenches, reserve troops were quartered in terraced bivouac areas in the valleys behind the line. Lt Col CBB White (GSO1), HQ 1st Aust Div Memorandum, 18 May 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/4 part 6; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, pp 50–52.

[86] Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, pp 50–52.

[87] Medcalf memior, quoted in James Hurst, *Game to the Last: the 11th Australian Infantry Battalion at Gallipoli*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2005, p 75.

[88] GS HQ 1st Aust Division, War Diary, 27 and 29 June 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/4 part 2.

[89] FW Taylor and TA Cusak, *Nulli Secundus: A History of the 2nd Battalion, AIF 1914–1919*, New Century Press, Sydney, 1942, p 151.

ATTACK AT KRITHIA

Krithia is a village situated seven kilometres from the toe of the Gallipoli Peninsula at Cape Helles, lying at the base of the rise named Achi Baba. The village was the objective of several failed attacks by British and French forces in the days following the 29th Division's landings at Helles but deficient in land-based artillery support, the attacks gained some ground until command and control broke down and at the end of the battle the allies were still well short of their objective.[90]

A second attempt to capture Krithia and Achi Baba occurred between 6 and 8 May and this (the Second Battle of Krithia) became the only battle fought at Helles in which the infantry of the 1st Division participated. To assist the 29th Division two ANZAC brigades—the 2nd Infantry Brigade (AIF) and the New Zealand Infantry Brigade—and some 20 ANZAC field guns were transferred south. The guns, including those of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 6th Batteries (AIF) landed on 4 May while the brigades were withdrawn from the ANZAC line and brought ashore two days later. Both on 6 and 7 May the ANZAC troops watched British and French forces attempt to advance across the open ground leading to Achi Baba. A further attempt on the morning of 8 May involved the New Zealand brigade operating as part of a composite division under Major General Archibald Paris (GOC Royal Naval Division). When this latest attempt also gained little ground, yet another attack was ordered for 8.30 pm that evening.

For the new attack McCay's 2nd Brigade was ordered to join in a general advance of the entire British line. No advance warning of their involvement was received until 4.55 pm when the order arrived, at which time McCay was visiting the New Zealanders and the Australians were preparing their evening meal. Despite the lack of battle preparation, the brigade was in position to join the assault as ordered. The brigade advanced with two battalions 'up' leading the assault, and the other two 'back' in support. The 6th and 7th battalions, each on a frontage of about 500 metres were deployed astride a bare spur leading

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[90] For detailed accounts of the battle see: Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, pp 1–43; and Ron Austin, *White Gurkhas: The 2nd Infantry Brigade at the Second Battle of Krithia, Gallipoli*, RJ and SP Austin, McCrae, 1989.

towards Achi Baba. Problems began soon after the attack commenced and the feeble supporting barrage could neither silence the Turkish guns nor suppress their machine-guns and rifles.[91]

After advancing over open ground under fire for nearly 500 metres the lead troops reached the jumping-off trenches. Within minutes the Australians were called out from this shelter by their commander to continue the advance. Pressing on under heavy fire, they covered another 500 metres before being forced to a standstill by withering fire and heavy losses. The lead Turkish positions could be observed only some 400 metres ahead but the village of Krithia was still 2000 metres away. The hour-long advance cost the 2nd Brigade 1056 casualties, or about one-third of its strength. This was the first brigade-sized formal attack by an Australian formation and despite the undoubted courage of the troops it was a bloody failure and a command fiasco.[92]

The reasons for the disaster are not hard to determine and blame may be equally proportioned between the senior British commanders, who ordered the ill-planned attack, and the Australians who lacked the experience and moral courage to stop it. The failure rankled with many men and led one to complain that his battalion was 'hastily flung into the worst prepared attack of the war to suffer terrible casualties, the price paid for the ineptitude of certain Imperial Staff deadbeats, pompous professional duds'.[93] On the other hand McCay, although brave in leading the advance, also failed in his duty for not attempting to halt the poorly conceived attack. On the night of 11 May the 2nd Brigade was relieved and it rejoined the 1st Division at Anzac a week later, while the 1st FA Brigade was retained at Helles. Thereafter the operations of the division were almost entirely defensive until August.[94]

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[91] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, 'Report on Operations of 2nd Brigade at Cape Helles 6th to 17th May 1915', 30 May 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/4 part 10.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Pte H O'Neill (7th Bn AIF) quoted in *Our Dear Old Battalion*, p 72.

[94] The 1st FA Brigade was to remain at Helles until late in the campaign and when it was returned to Anzac in October it was placed under the command of the 2nd Australian Division.

THE AUGUST OFFENSIVE

The mutual exhaustion that followed in the wake of the failed Turkish counterattack on 19 May allowed both sides to consolidate their defences and ponder their next move. Throughout July preparations for a renewed British attempt to break the stalemate proceeded. The 1st Division's role in this new offensive was only a small part in a much larger effort to break the Turkish front and clear the Peninsula. The British IX Corps landing at Suvla Bay to the north of Anzac was to establish a new operating base. The main ANZAC effort was a daring flank march by the NZ&A Division to break-out to the north and assault the heights of Sari Bair. The 1st Division's role was supporting and it was to undertake preliminary operations to distract the Turks from the main objective by attacking its central sector at Lone Pine.[95]

After a careful appreciation of the situation the ANZAC staff came up with an imaginative if impractical plan to achieve their mission. On 1 July Birdwood advised Hamilton that in order to give the NZ&A Division the best chance of success he would have to draw the Turkish reserves away from his left hook and thus the 1st Division's Lone Pine feint would have to convince the enemy that it was the main effort of the offensive. The attack was to be launched on the evening prior to the NZ&A Division's operations, allowing sufficient time to pull the local Turkish reserves away from Sari Bair.[96]

Major General James Legge (GOC 1st Division at the time), Brigadier General Harold Walker (GOC 1st Infantry Brigade and later GOC 1st Division) and Brudenell White (GSO1) all objected to the division's role in the forthcoming offensive believing it had little chance of success.[97] Despite this, once the

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1st FA Bde (AIF), War Diary, 9 October 1915, AWM4, item 13/29/11; and Cubis, *A History of "A" Battery, New South Wales Artillery (1871–1899), Royal Australian Artillery (1899–1971)*, p 129.

[95] Maj Gen W Braithwaite (CGS MEF), 'Instructions for GOC A&NZ Army Corps', 30 July 1915, AWM4, 1/25/4 part 2; Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, pp 436–472; James, *Gallipoli*, pp 235–257; and Robertson, *Anzac and Empire*, pp 113–117.

[96] Lt Gen W Birdwood (GOC), HQ ANZAC Memorandum Ga89 to GHQ MEF, 1 July 1915, AWM4, 1/25/4 part 3; Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, p 444; and Prior, *Gallipoli*, pp 164–165.

[97] For Legge's objections see: Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, pp 424 and 453. For Walker's objections see: Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, pp 452, 453 and 454. For White's objections see: Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, pp 452.

orders were confirmed the commanders and their staffs got down to planning. A series of preliminary studies were undertaken by the divisional and brigade staffs examining the task, the enemy situation, the strength and capacity of the 1st Division and additional factors such the timing of the assault and the amount of artillery support required. Although undated and usually unsigned these 'Appreciations of the Situation' probably date from early July and were the work of Legge, Walker, White, and Major Dennis King (Brigade Major 1st Infantry Brigade AIF).[98] Supporting the appreciations were separate studies of the ground and enemy positions that are identifiable as the work of Major Thomas Blamey (GSO3 1st Division).[99] The appreciations conclude with an assessment of troops required by the 1st Division to hold its current positions and the additional troops and artillery needed to assault Lone Pine and mount a supporting attack on German Officers' Trench. They are simple, succinct and clear and these documents became the basis of the 1st Division's plan.[100]

In the final plan the spade became as important as the rifle as the 1st Division's planners sought to reduce the amount of deadly ground over which the attack must precede. Fortunately in the months from May through to July a series of tunnels were excavated from the 1st Division's front-line towards the Turkish trenches opposite. Although originally dug as a counter to the threat of Turkish mining, these tunnels became the key to the success for the Lone Pine attack.[101]

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[98] 'An Appreciation of a Situation' was taught at the pre-war staff colleges and the aim of the appreciation process was to enable a commander to make a decision about a course of action having considered the various factors that would come into play and then allow that commander to pass this on, either verbally or in writing, to the staff to allow them to draft the plans to implement the choice of action. Précis, 'Appreciation of a Situation', nd, AWM27, item 310/24; and ABBA, 'The "Intention" in Operation Orders', *Commonwealth Military Journal* (December 1911) pp 773–778.

[99] Blamey as GSO3 was the division's chief intelligence officer and today Blamey's work would be termed 'Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield'.

[100] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, August 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/7 parts 6 and 7; Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, p 498.

[101] On 6 June Walker called a conference to consider and rationalise the division's mining opposite Lone Pine, Johnston's Jolly and German Officers' Trench. Direction followed on 20 June to expedite the progress of the tunnelling and this was followed by a further conference was held on 29 June. Some of the preparation for the Lone Pine attack was supervised by Legge who superseded Walker on 24 June and held command of the 1st Division until he left

The Australian tunnels were about two metres deep and from one-and-a-half to two metres wide. A thin crust of earth of between 15 to 30 centimetres was left as a roof to the tunnels, which were pushed forward varying distances, according to the proximity of the Turkish line. Those opposite German Officers' Trench, which was about 90 metres from the 1st Division's line, were driven forward about 45 to 65 metres. The tunnels opposite Pine Lone varied in distance from the Turkish line from between 50 and 120 metres. At Lone Pine, once the tunnels were complete another tunnel was dug linking the heads of the original tunnels, forming a new underground firing line roughly parallel to the old Australian line.[102] It was from these forward tunnels that the men of the 1st Brigade were to launch their attack on Lone Pine at 4.00 pm on 6 August. They were to be followed at midnight by a 6th Battalion attack on German Officers' Trench.[103]

Preliminary instructions for the 1st Division's attack were issued on 29 July, while the orders for the attack were issued five days later on 4 August.[104] Brigade, battalion and company orders flowed down and those that survive show a definite improvement over the sketchy instructions generally given prior to the landings.[105] Other preparations immediately preceding the attack included the sharpening of bayonets, the sewing of calico patches onto the arms and backs of the attacker's tunics to provide some form of identification during the attack, and the all important preliminary fire to clear the enemy's obstacles.[106]

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for Egypt to take command of the 2nd Division on 26 July. The mining program however, was instigated by Walker in early June well before he returned to command the 1st Brigade. Lt Col CBB White (GSO1), HQ 1st Aust Div Memorandum G35, 20 June 1915, AWM4, 1/42/5 part 7 appendix 2; Lt Col CBB White (GSO1), HQ 1st Aust Div Memorandum G461, 30 June 1915, AWM4, 1/42/5 part 1; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, p 259–262 and 444.

[102] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, 'Notes on the Attack on Lone Pine', nd, AWM4, item 1/42/7 part 5.

[103] This and the following section is based on: Brig Gen HG Bennett, 'Orgy of Death: German Officers' Trench', *Reveille*, 31 March 1930, p 24; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, pp 601–605.

[104] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 4 August 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/7 part 1; and Lt Col CB White (GSO1), HQ 1st Aust Div GS Memorandum No 4, 29 July 1915, and Brig Gen HB Walker (GOC), HQ 1st Aust Div Operation Order No 9, 4 August 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/7 parts 6 and 7.

[105] Maj L Morshead (OC C Coy, 2nd Bn AIF), typed orders 'Assault on Lone Pine.—6.8.1915', AWM: Morshead papers, 3DRL 2632, item 3/1.

[106] Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, pp 499–501.

The greatest immediate concern for the attackers was the Turkish wire. If the assaulting troops were stopped or even slowed in their dash across no-man's-land they would be quickly destroyed by the flanking fire of enemy machine-guns at German Officers' Trench and higher up the ridge to the north. To deal with wire and the suppression of Turkish line Walker had roughly nine-and-a-half batteries of artillery and some naval gunfire support.[107] According to one participant initially:

> *…the artillery did not get on to it too well; but on the day of the attack they got their range, and practically destroyed it, to the great relief of the troops, as they knew how well the Turks' M.G.'s had the front ranged. The Howitzers at the same time were firing on the trenches to keep the Turks down; also to destroy overhead cover, but very little damage was done to the overhead cover.*[108]

Although considerable effort went into the planning of the indirect support for the Lone Pine attack, there were too few guns and too little ammunition.[109]

As the minutes wound-down towards the time of the attack the troops watched nervously as the warships designated to provide support sailed into view:

> *A few minutes after 4 p.m. on 6th August…five of our warships were seen on the horizon, making in the direction of Anzac. Within*

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[107] The fire plan extended over 4–6 August involving: A, B and D batteries, 69th Brigade (RFA); the 4th Battery, Lowland Brigade (RFA); one section of NZ 4.5-inch howitzers; the 1st Battery (NZFA); and the 4th and 5th batteries (AIF). Walker also had at his disposal the division's Improvised Heavy Battery, the 26th Mountain Battery and an assortment of trench mortars. The Heavy Battery's two 6-inch howitzers and a single 4.7-inch gun were reserved for counter-battery work while the limitations of the 10-pounder guns meant they were to seek targets of opportunity. GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, August 1915, appendices, Brig Gen A Skeen (BGGS), HQ ANZAC Order No 15, 2 August 1915, and Brig Gen HB Walker (GOC), HQ 1st Aust Div Operation Order No 9, 4 August 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/7 parts 6 and 7; and HQ 1st Aust Div Arty, War Diary, 6 August 1915, AWM4, 13/10/12 part 1.

[108] JJ Collingwood, 'Lone Pine: 1st Brigade Epic Fight', *Reveille*, 31 July 1931, pp 13 and 31. Collingwood was a corporal and participant in the August offensive and he was awarded the MM for his conduct with the 2nd Battalion during the defence of Lone Pine.

[109] Despite the importance of the artillery fire on the wire entanglements only 380 rounds could be allocated to the task, with 383 rounds actually fired. Of the eights guns that engaged the Lone Pine wire and trenches, two of them (or one quarter of the total) were old and inaccurate. Brig Gen JT Hobbs (CDA), HQ 1st Aust Div Arty Operation Order No 1, 3 August 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/7 part 8 appendix (1) "A"; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, p 500.

> *half-an-hour they had taken position a few miles from the beach. As it neared the half-hour everyone on shore began to count the minutes. Exactly on time the warships and our artillery…opened fire, and things got very willing. At first the noise was not so bad; but after a few minutes, when the guns wakened up to their work and the warships got going, it became terrific. The Turks were not long in bringing every one of their guns into action, so it was hard to hear ourselves speaking up at the front…. After an hours bombardment our guns ceased firing on the Turkish trenches at Lone Pine and directed their fire on other targets. At once the men of the 1st Infantry Brigade were out of their trenches…*[110]

The 2nd, 3rd and 4th battalions in two waves made the assault. The first wave charged from the new front line created by the tunnels while the second wave charged from the old front line. One of those in the leading wave was Second Lieutenant Ernest Litchfield, only recently returned to the Peninsula from hospital and newly commissioned. He later recalled:

> *On repeating the whistle blast, I got out and tore like hell over to the Turkish trench passing some No. 9 men coming out of the holes in the ground, they seemed to go down under my feet.*
>
> *Coming up to the Turks trench, instead of dead, there were live and very active Turks standing almost shoulder to shoulder and immediately in front of me two of them working a machine-gun. Their bullets must have passed between my legs, as I came up. My rifle with ten in the magazine and one in the breech, I fired down at those men as fast as I could and remember ramming in and firing a couple more clips as well. Then I remembered my objective, the fourth trench, and leapt over the first and several cross trenches firing into them at men as I passed.*[111]

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[110] Col JL McKinlay, OBE MM, 'Lone Pine and German Officers' Trench', *Stand To*, Vol 11, No 3 (July–September 1967) p 31.

[111] EN Litchfield, 'A Prelude to Lone Pine', AWM: 3DRL3520, item 131, pp 3–4.

Casualties among the leading waves were considerable as some bunching occurred due to uncut wire and the presence of previously undetected overhead protection on some of the Turkish trenches. Despite this the troops fought their way into the position and established blocks on the communications trenches leading back to the Turkish reserve positions. Although the Turks launched immediate violent counterattacks from the north and south, in general the Australians held their ground.[112]

In an effort to improve command and control the senior commanders and their staffs had moved closer to the front-line and redundancy was built into the communication plan. Before the battle Walker and some of the key staff moved into an old 1st Brigade HQ position at the head of White's Valley while Brigadier General Nevill Smyth, VC (GOC 1st Infantry Brigade AIF) placed himself at Brown's Dip immediately behind the line and where his reserve of the 1st Battalion waited.[113] Extra efforts had also been taken to improve communications for the attack although it was not long before the shellfire began to take its toll as one signaller recalled:

> *At 6 o'clock I was in my dugout…when I heard the old cry—"linesman"…. When I reached the sig dugout to find out what was the trouble, I was told that we were out of touch with the 1st Brigade. At first we succeeded in following our telephone line, but as it got dark we started to have trouble. After a few hundred yards we came to Artillery Road and it was here that our troubles grew fast, for the parapet along the road had been blown in…. For a short distance along the road we traced our line, but in the end we had to give up as all the lines were in a tangled mess. As it was impossible to sort out our wire, we decided to go to see if anything could be done from the other end…. After three hours work we*

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[112] GOC 1st Aust Div, Despatch No 15 to GOC ANZAC, 14 August 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/7 part 7.

[113] Brig Gen HB Walker (GOC), HQ 1st Aust Div Operation Order No 8, 2 August 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/7 part 7; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, p 501.

> *were once more able to get in touch with 1st Brigade by telephone…*[114]

Not that it mattered greatly. The battle degenerated into an all-in brawl where junior officers and soldiers made the difference and battalion and brigade commanders were reduced to funnelling reinforcements to wherever the need appeared greatest. Charles Bean wrote of seeing Smyth 'directing reinforcements into Lone Pine tunnels as quietly as a ticket collector passing passengers onto a platform'.[115] In reality there was little else he could do but it was a task that demanded character rather than any great tactical finesse.

In contrast to the success at Lone Pine the supporting feint at German Officers' Trench was a disaster. This attack was to be made by the 6th Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Henry Gordon Bennett, and the plan was similar to that at the Pine, hinging on the use of pre-dug tunnels to close the distance over which the troops would assault but in this case considerable faith was placed in a series of three mines dug under the Turkish front line.

Towards dusk the 6th Battalion moved forward to the firing line opposite German Officers' Trench. At 11.00 pm, 11.30 pm and 11.40 pm the engineers blew the mines. The men of the 6th Battalion waited anxiously for the explosions, which it was anticipated would destroy at least a portion of the Turkish line. They waited in vain as nothing happened and all that was discerned by the waiting troops was a muffled explosion in the bowels of the earth. It transpired that the mines were further from the surface than was calculated and there was no evidence of destruction among the Turks.

On the other hand the explosions alerted the Turks to the likelihood of an attack in that sector and they retaliated with heavy artillery fire that severely damaged the communications tunnels forward of the Australian line. A quick check of the galleries revealed that only one was untouched and another could still be used with some difficulty. With only half an hour to go before the attack was to be

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[114] McKinlay, 'Lone Pine and German Officers' Trench', p 31.

[115] Bean quoted in Ivan Chapman, 'Smyth, Sir Nevill Maskelyne (1868–1941)', *ABD*, Vol 12, p 3.

launched, the battalion plan had to be altered and the slow procession to the jump-off firing ports commenced through tunnels largely unknown to the guides. The tunnels were in complete darkness and no light could be risked in case the Turks detected ambient light from the shell holes in the roof, alerting them further to the plan. Within the tunnels, in Gordon Bennett's words, 'congestion was great, and the movement slow.'[116] This delayed the occupation of the jumping-off points and forced a delay in the H-Hour by about 35 minutes. By that time all hope of surprise was lost.[117]

At 12.35 am a single blast of a whistle, which was repeated along the line by the officers, signalled the assault. As the men emerged from the small firing ports at the head of the tunnels they were immediately subject to intense machine-gun and rifle fire. The machine-gun fire was particularly destructive and no more than three men reached the Turkish line and very few made it more than two metres before being hit. Within 30 seconds the saps connecting the forward tunnel with the newly opened firing posts were choked with the dead and wounded. This prevented the planned second wave from advancing in support. The inky darkness of the tunnels quickly filled with wounded men and the saps, being so narrow, did not allow for rapid removal of the wounded or reinforcement of the attack. The officer leading the first wave managed to stagger back to Bennett to inform him of the situation and Bennett quickly set about clearing the tunnels as best he could.[118]

Bennett informed HQ 2nd Brigade of the result of the attack and this was passed to division. To Bennett's chagrin the battalion was ordered to make another attempt. The preparations took about an hour and when the second attack was launched it too quickly melted away in the face of the hail of Turkish fire. Once more brigade HQ was informed and once again Walker ordered

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[116] Bennett, 'Orgy of Death: German Officers' Trench', p 24.

[117] GOC 1st Aust Div, Despatch No 15 to GOC ANZAC, 14 August 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/7 part 7; Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, pp 601–602; and Bennett, 'Orgy of Death: German Officers' Trench', p 24.

[118] GOC 1st Aust Div, Despatch No 15 to GOC ANZAC, 14 August 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/7 part 7; Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, pp 602–604; and Bennett, 'Orgy of Death: German Officers' Trench', p 25.

another attempt. Fortunately at this time the brigade major, Major Carl Jess, who was present in the trenches during the second failure, intervened to support Bennett's appeal to cancel the operation. Walker ordered that the battalion should reorganise and be prepared to launch another attack but this order was never given as daylight intervened. The failed attack was a traumatic experience for the battalion, costing 80 killed and 66 wounded. The CO was no less scarred by the experience and this soured his relations with his superiors for some time, increasing his already jaundiced view of the regular officers who made up most of the brigade and divisional senior command and staff.[119] Nearly 15 years later Gordon Bennett was still bitter when he wrote a personal account of the attack emotively titled 'Orgy of Death'.[120]

The Lone Pine attack was bold plan that succeeded against the odds. Most importantly the defenders were actually taken by surprise allowing the first waves to cross no-man's-land in broad daylight. Conversely, the attack on the German Officers' Trench failed because it was a flawed plan whose execution was bungled. The defenders were not taken by surprise, too few troops could make the assault from the firing ports and although the men displayed the same courage as at Lone Pine they could not overcome the inadequacies of a plan that allowed no room for error. As one soldier recalled: 'If we had of been sent over in 1 line, from the old trench, we may have had a chance, but as it was, it was a dog's chance we had.'[121] All in all the shoddy handling of this small, tragic attack and the lack of coordination at all levels merely confirms that the 1st Division still had a lot to learn.

By the night of 9 August the Turks, worn by incessant activity and realising that the main threat to them lay elsewhere, abandoned their efforts to retake Lone

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[119] The 2nd Brigade had since July been commanded by Brigadier General John Forsyth, a pre-war regular who had previously commanded 4th LH Regiment (AIF) and had served as the 1st Division's AAQMG before his promotion. In addition Bennett already had a long-standing feud with Thomas Blamey, which probably pre-dated the Great War. JG Williams, 'Forsyth, John Keatly (1867–1928)', *ADB*, Vol 8, pp 555–556; NAA: B2455, file FORSYTH JK; and AB Lodge, 'Bennett, Henry Gordon (1887–1962)', *ADB*, Vol 13, pp 165–167.

[120] Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, p 605; and Maj Gen HG Bennett, 'German Officers': 6th Bn's Attack', *Reveille*, Vol 5, No 11 (1 August 1932) pp 10–11.

[121] Pte PA Collins (6th Bn AIF), diary entry, 7 August 1915, SLV: MS11305, MSB644.

Pine. They had pushed back the new Australian line at points, chiefly to the south, while losing more than 6000 men in the fighting and expending most of their available reserves, which included three additional regiments thrown into the fighting. The 1st Division had also called upon additional reserves, sending the 12th and 7th battalions into the Pine by 8 August, and the 7th LH regiment and elements of the 5th Battalion by 9 August. The men had done more than was required of them but over 2300 Australians were killed or wounded at Lone Pine, leaving the division an expended force, and in the end their efforts came to nought in the broader scheme of things.[122]

The August offensive failed for the same reasons as the original landings. It was a failure to plan realistically, which in turn was under-pinned by a faulty appreciation of what was possible on the modern battlefield. The ANZAC troops were tired and lacked the means to break the deadlock particularly on the northern flank where the decision was sought. Unable to hold the heights of Sari Bair, the ANZAC could not even achieve a viable break-in of their enemy's position and even if they had, they lacked the capacity to rapidly exploit it.

THE WITHDRAWAL

The severe fighting during August left the 1st Division shattered. Between April and August its infantry brigades had each suffered about 3000 casualties or three-quarters of their Establishment and more than a quarter of the original officers were dead.[123] Between the casualties and the failing health of the rest, the division was a spent force and its units were gradually withdrawn to Lemnos for rest. By the time they returned to the Peninsula, the use of lightly held front-line trenches with strong support lines was more firmly established. Hence

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[122] Turkish General Staff, *A Brief History of the Canakkale Campaign of the First World War (June 1914–January 1916)*, pp 190–191; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, p 566.

[123] For example, between 25 April and 30 August the 3rd Brigade lost 31 officers killed, 53 wounded, three injured and six missing (93 out of Establishment of 132). Total soldier casualties amounted to 2922 out of an Establishment of 3985. 3rd Inf Bde (AIF), War Diary, AWM4, item 23/3/3 part 1 appendix 33.

when the 1st Brigade arrived back late in October it occupied defensive positions with two battalions in the line and two battalions in support.[124]

The eight-month Gallipoli campaign lasted approximately 240 days. In that time a typical battalion spent one quarter of its time (60 days) on administration, the majority of which was rest on the nearby islands (50 days). Tellingly, only one day out of the 240 can be attributed to formation training, and while other training did occur, this was generally focussed on training reinforcements. The other three-quarters of the battalion's time (160 days) was spent engaged in operations. This can be broken down into about 15 days engaged in offensive action and periods of heavy fighting (the landings and the August offensive), while the majority (145 days) was spent on the defensive, holding the line, conducting reliefs and mounting the withdrawal.[125]

One of the oft-noted ironies of Gallipoli is that the most successful part of the campaign was the withdrawal. Paradoxically withdrawing when in contact with the enemy is the most hazardous of all military operations. That this task was achieved with small loss of life is nothing short of a miracle but it was a carefully planned miracle.

Following the failed August offensive it was apparent that operationally the campaign was lost. At the strategic level Kitchener dispatched General Sir Charles Monro to assess the chances of another effort. On the last day of October 1915 Monro sent a secret signal to his chief in which he began:

> *After an inspection of the Gallipoli Peninsular I have arrived at the following conclusions. The troops on the Peninsular with the exception of the Australian & New Zealand Corps are not equal to a sustained effort owning to the inexperience of the officers, the*

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[124] 1st Inf Bde (AIF), 'No 23 Operation Memorandum', 30 October 1915, AWM4, item 23/18/5; and 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 30 October 1915, AWM4, item 23/18/5.

[125] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, April–December 1915, AWM4, items 1/42/3–1/42/11; and 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 25 April–20 December 1915, AWM4, items 23/18/1–23/18/14.

> *want of training of the men and the depleted condition of many of the units.*[126]

The next day Kitchener asked if this was also the opinion of Birdwood and the other corps commanders and requested an estimate of the expected loss rate if the force was to withdraw.[127] Monro replied that the senior commanders thought losses would be somewhere between 30 to 40 percent. Quoting Birdwood he also noted that he, among the three corps commanders, was the only one against withdrawal citing the psychological effect this would have on the Moslem world and on the morale of the British troops. Generals Byng, Davies and Monro all thought it better to withdraw.[128] Two weeks later Kitchener advised the Prime Minister that Gallipoli should be evacuated and:

> *Careful and secret preparations for the Peninsular are being made. If undertaken it would be an operation of extreme military difficulty and danger; but I have hopes that given time and weather, which may be expected to be suitable until about the end of December, the troops will carry out this task with less loss than was previously estimated.*[129]

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[126] Lt Gen Sir C Monro, copy of signal 'MF 800' to Lord Kitchener, 31 October 1915, AWM45, item 2/13.

[127] Lord Kitchener, copy of signal '9393 Cipher' to Sir Charles Monro, 1 November 1915, AWM45, item 2/13.

[128] Lt Gen Sir C Monro, copy of signal 'No MF 802' to Lord Kitchener, 2 November 1915. Davies however, later changed his mind and advised that he thought Helles could be held. Lord Kitchener, copy of signal 'No 64' to Prime Minister, 17 November 1915. The estimate of losses was also later upgraded by the War Office to somewhere between 30 and 50 percent and an expected loss of 50,000 out of 125,000 men on the Peninsula. Lt Gen AJ Murray (CIGS), copy of 'Summary of Arguments for and Against the complete or partial Evacuation of Gallipoli', 22 November 1915. All on AWM45, 2/13

[129] Lord Kitchener, copy of signal 'No 37' to Prime Minister, 15 November 1915, AWM45, item 2/13.

A little over a week later Kitchener was advised that the War Council had approved the withdrawal. Another week later a joint naval and military committee met at Army HQ to begin planning.[130]

On 10 December instructions were received from HQ ANZAC to reduce the strength of the 1st Division by 2000 men and 15 guns. This decision was ostensibly to conform to a new policy of reducing the Anzac garrison to a minimum to facilitate supply and reliefs during the winter. The details as to how the 2000 men were to be made up were left to the Major General Henry 'Harry' Chauvel, who was commanding the division in the absence of Walker who had been wounded.[131] Orders for the reduction and for the redistribution of the line were issued the same day and the troops were embarked on the night of 11/12 December. Up until this date the division had not been informed of the intended withdrawal.[132]

On the afternoon of 12 December Birdwood briefed Chauvel that the evacuation of Anzac and Suvla had been decided and that although brigade commanders might also be privately informed, the news was not to be communicated to the troops. Despite this attempt to maintain operational security, the possibility of withdrawal had already been rumoured and an artillery officer returning from Imbros brought the news that more than one senior officer had advised him not to buy stores to take back because Anzac was to be evacuated. A warrant officer returning from Mudros had a similar experience. Apparently the

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[130] Prime Minister, copy of signal 'No 10234' to Lord Kitchener, 23 November 1915, AWM45, 2/13; and 'Proceedings of a Joint Naval and Military Committee Held at Army Headquarters, Dardanelles Army, 30th Novr 15', AWM45, item 2/13.

[131] Chauvel was an Australian-born, pre-war regular who was chosen to command the 1st LH Brigade (AIF) in 1914. During his service on Gallipoli he had temporarily commanded the NZ&A Division but on 6 November he replaced Joseph Talbot Hobbs who was commanding the 1st Division following Walkers wounding in late September. Chauvel commanded the division during the withdrawal and the reorganisation in Egypt until March 1916 when Walker returned. Alex J Hill, 'Chauvel, Sir Henry George', *ADB*, Vol 7, pp 624–628; Alex J Hill, *Chauvel of the Light Horse: A Biography of General Sir Harry Chauvel, GCMG, KCB*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1978, pp 61–62; Alex J Hill, 'General Sir Harry Chauvel', in Horner, *The Commanders*, pp 60–84; and Hill, *Chauvel of the Light Horse*, pp 61–66.

[132] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, Order No 1, 10 December 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/11 part 1; and 'Notes on the Withdrawal from Anzac', nd, AWM: Blamey papers, 3DRL/6643, Box 55, item 5/17.

evacuation was freely discussed at both Imbros and Mudros and on this occasion the 'furphy' was well founded.[133]

Following Birdwood's conference, Chauvel briefed his brigade commanders and the commanders of key divisional units. They then began planning in consultation with the divisional staff. Brudenell White (now BGGS ANZAC) briefed the operations staff starting with Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Bridges (GSO1 1st Division) who then briefed the brigade majors.[134] Preliminary preparations involved the thinning out of the division from about 8848 to 4800 of which about 2400 were to be re-embarked on each of the final two nights. Special measures were also implemented to conceal the allied intentions from the Turks and to allow the withdrawal to proceed without interference. In accordance with this the number of guns at Anzac was gradually reduced by removing those that could be spared and Birdwood directed which guns were to be retained to provide close support to the infantry until the last night. As it was all but a handful of badly worn guns were successfully removed and those left behind were destroyed as part of the destruction policy.[135]

ANZAC Order Number 121 was received early on 15 December and it lay down that the withdrawal was to be completed during the hours of darkness over two nights. The principle upon which the withdrawal was organised was that the troops in the fire trenches were to be gradually reduced, moving from the front line direct to the beach for evacuation. Birdwood selected an intermediate line established along Walker's Ridge, Plugge's Plateau and MacLagan's Ridge,

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[133] Bean, AOH, Vol II, p 870; and Hill, *Chauvel of the Light Horse*, p 62.

[134] Arthur Bridges was an Indian Army regular and staff college graduate who had been the Director of Military Art at RMC-A before joining the 1st Division on Gallipoli. He superseded Duncan Glasfurd and following the withdrawal Bridges was appointed GSO1 for the move to France. On the Western Front he handed over to Thomas Blamey in July 1916 and Bridges joined the 2nd Australian Division as GSO1. Arthur Bridges was the cousin of William Throsby Bridges. Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, p 604, fn7; AIF, *Staff Regimental and Graduation List of Officers*, November 1915 p 10, October 1917 pp 10 and 273, July 1916 pp and 145, and April 1917 pp 7 and 171, and June 1917 pp 12 and 275; and NAA: B2455, file BRIDGES AH.

[135] Cunliffe Owen states that only six guns were left behind and destroyed while Blamey's notes indicate nine. The difference may partially be accounted for by a 4.7-inch gun and a 3-pounder Hotchkiss that were destroyed before the last night. The guns destroyed on the last night were four 18-pounders, two 5-inch howitzers and a 12-pounder anti-aircraft gun. Cunliffe Owen, 'Artillery at Anzac in the Gallipoli Campaign, p 5356; and 'Notes on the Withdrawal from Anzac', nd, AWM: Blamey papers, 3DRL/6643, Box 55, item 5/17.

and this was to be held by 250 rifles that were to be in place by 6.00 pm on the second night. This line, with its reserves of ammunition, bombs, water and rations was to cover the final embarkation from the beaches. Chauvel's plan was detailed in the 1st Division's Order Number 4 issued on 16 December.[136]

The reduction of the division's strength from nearly 9000 to less than 5000 presented a number of difficulties. Bad weather and the lack of loading facilities not only prevented the embarkation of vehicles and stores, it also rendered it impossible to foretell the exact numbers that could be embarked on any particular night. Consequently the personnel numbers varied, along with the number of guns and animals that remained and it was not easy to get correct returns. Still, the process of thinning-out continued over five nights from 13 to 17 December and although it was not possible to re-embark all of the vehicles and stores, 38 guns and 8848 troops were shipped to Mudros. This was only achieved by strict security and a bold, imaginative deception plan.[137]

The measures taken to conceal the ANZAC intentions have become part of the mythology of Gallipoli. The 'drip rifle' in particular is held up as one of the reasons why secrecy could be maintained and the withdrawal effected without loss. While these types of inventions were ingenious, they were only a minor part of the plan, which certainly did not hinge on such novelties. In reality the aim was to preserve the appearance of normal conditions in every aspect of daily routine. Troops and mules were marched along exposed routes to simulate the arrival of reinforcements and the normal distribution of supplies, the now famous cricket match was staged on Shell Green, and tents and stockpiles were left in view. In addition, and probably of even greater importance, were the regular periods of silence that the troops were ordered to

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[136] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, Order No 4, 16 December 1915, AWM4, item 1/42/11 part 1; and 'Notes on the Withdrawal from Anzac', nd, AWM: Blamey papers, 3DRL/6643, Box 55, item 5/17.

[137] Those stores that could not be removed were destroyed or hidden. Particular care was taken in burying stores beyond the reach of a crowbar and sandbags were placed a few feet below any covering of turned soil to simulate hard ground. Dump heaps were moved over buried stores and the surface disguised with refuse. Officers were sent to destroy the surplus stores of rum and other alcohol. 'Notes on the Withdrawal from Anzac', nd, AWM: Blamey papers, 3DRL/6643, Box 55, item 5/17.

observe. During these ‘silent stunts’ the troops were ordered to cease all firing and the timings of the quiet periods was extended from 15 up to 90 minutes. This accustomed the Turks to periods of inactivity and more importantly to silence. The three days of ‘silent ruse’ conducted during the last week of November certainly had more impact on the success of the withdrawal than the ‘drip rifle’. As it was, on that occasion the Turks displayed marked uneasiness and attempted to reconnoitre the Australian line in several places, suffering a number of casualties. This undoubtedly led to more caution on their part in December.[138]

Intelligence reports for several days prior to the withdrawal indicated that the Turks were quite ignorant of the allied intentions. And so the plan continued to run according to schedule with the troops displaying considerable discipline. On the night of 18 December the troops began to file out of their trenches at 5.30 pm, with the first parties reaching Watson’s Pier at 6.00 pm and from that hour onward a constant stream of men filed on board the lighters until 8.10 pm by which time the whole of the first party had been embarked. Steps were then taken to accelerate the movement of the second party, which began to embark about 10.15 pm, with embarkation complete by 11.30 pm.

On the second night the arrangements worked with the same clockwork regularity. The lighters were in readiness for each party as they reach the beach and the troops filed on board without the slightest confusion. The operation was however, favoured by almost ideal weather conditions, as it remained calm and still with a misty moon which gave ample light without illuminating the transports. The naval arrangements also worked well both ashore and afloat. The lighters and cutters were always ready and were expeditiously loaded, dispatched and returned. The troops were conveyed in the motor lighters and

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[138] Brudenell White developed the concept of the quite periods or ‘silent ruses’, while the ‘drip rifles’ were only used on the final night as the last troops began withdrawing to the beach. It is unlikely that the Turks, even if they had become aware of the withdrawal at this late stage, could have effectively interfered with the embarkation once the last troops began pulling-back to the beach. Rosemary Derham, *The Silent Ruse: Escape from Gallipoli: A Record and Memories of the Life of General Sir Brudenell White KCB KCMG KCVO DSO*, Cliffe Books Australia, Armadale, 1998; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, pp 842–845.

cutters to the transports off shore. At 4.10 am on the morning of 20 December the last soldier stepped off Turkish soil at Anzac and was spirited away.[139]

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In the eight-month Gallipoli campaign the 1st Division conducted only five major operations at brigade level or above. These were the initial landings and battle for the beachhead; the attack by the 2nd Brigade at Krithia; the defence against the Turkish counterattack, also in May; the feint by the 1st and 2nd Brigades at Lone Pine and German Officers' Trench during the offensive in August; and the withdrawal from the Peninsula in December. Despite the selfless gallantry and stoic courage in the face of appalling conditions, the Gallipoli campaign was a failure and leaving aside the mythology that shrouds this ill-fated campaign, what it did demonstrate were the severe limitations of the original 1st Division.

On its commitment to Gallipoli the 1st Division comprised fine fighting material even if it was too raw for such a complex task. Organisationally it also had a number of serious flaws within which contained the seeds of defeat. The first of these was firepower, or more accurately the lack of it. The division's main manoeuvre elements—its infantry battalions—had very limited organic firepower. Nearly 70 percent of the division's manpower was held in its battalions with each holding only four machine-guns at best, with the rest of its firepower being generated by bolt-action rifles. Although the gunners packed more punch their problem was the number and size of their guns. While British divisions in France contained roughly one gun for every 159 bayonets, the 1st Division had less than half this, with only one gun for every 336 bayonets.[140] Compounding this was the ammunition shortage and initial reliance on shrapnel shells, a round requiring considerable skill to employ and quite ineffective against entrenched troops. With its flat trajectory field guns, and the complete

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[139] Among the final group to leave was Lieutenant Charles Littler (12th Bn AIF) who was known as the 'Duke of Anzac' for his role as beach commandant at North Beach. Matthew Higgins, 'Littler, Charles Augustus Murray (1868–1916)', *ADB*, Vol 10, p 124; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, p 896.

[140] This was calculated by comparing the total number of artillery pieces available to each division with the combined strength of the division's infantry battalions. GS, *FSPB (1914)*, p 10; and GS, *WE of 1st Australian Division*, 1915, pp 9 and 26.

absence of any howitzers or heavy mortars, the division could never generate sufficient fire to neutralise, much less destroy, its well dug-in opponents.

The traditional judgement on the Gallipoli campaign is that it was a brilliant strategic scheme that could have ended the war early if only it was not hopelessly bungled in execution. On the twenty-first anniversary of the campaign this fallacy was regurgitated in the dramatically titled *Peninsular of Death* where the authors expressed the belief that '…had the Allied troops carried the heights of the Peninsula in 1915, and with the assistance of the Navy in the Dardanelles, had pressed on the capture of Constantinople, the Great War would have cost the world not four years of blood and horror, but something less than two.'[141]

The reality is very different as Robin Prior succinctly observes in his recent history of the campaign:

> *Despite the bravery of the Allied troops who fought there, the campaign was fought in vain. It did not shorten the war by a single day nor in reality did it ever offer that prospect. As Churchill said (and then promptly forgot), 'Germany is the foe & it is bad war to seek cheaper victories'.*[142]

For all of the heroism and the exertions of the 1st Division, it was only on the Western Front where it could really help end the war.

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[141] WJ Blackledge and Digger Craven, *Peninsular of Death*, Sampson Low, Marston and Co, London, nd, pp 1 and 2.

[142] Prior, *Gallipoli*, p 252.

CHAPTER 6

‘WHAT WE HAVE WE’LL HOLD’: DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS ON THE WESTERN FRONT[1]

It is April 1916, the midpoint of the Great War. Since March the 1st Division has been arriving in France and for the first time the ‘1st Divvy’ was on the main battlefront. They encounter a pleasant land—a welcome change from sea voyages, the barren slopes of Gallipoli, and the dusty training camps of Egypt—but when they enter the line they find a very different kind of war from that they experienced on the Peninsula. Artillery barrages rock their trenches daily, costly raids and patrols are regularly launched against the foe, while German counterattacks are repelled, and the division constantly moves in and out of the line and up and down the front. Casualties mount while materiel and men are consumed at a prodigious rate as the men of the 1st Division stand their tours in the trenches that have come to shape the popular image of the Great War.

While the previous chapter examined the 1st Division’s performance in its first test of battle, this and the next chapter will explore its follow-on service on the Western Front. It was in France where the division was pitted against the German Army and only there could it help end the war. The 1st Division spent 959 days on the Western Front from the time Divisional HQ (DHQ) disembarked at Marseilles on 28 March 1916 through until the Armistice on 11 November 1918. In contrast to Gallipoli the division’s activities on the Western Front were considerably more varied, with the division spending slightly less than a quarter of its time engaged in some sort of administrative activity (198 days: 88 days on

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[1] The divisional motto 'What We Have We'll Hold' was introduced by Harold Walker on Gallipoli although its origins pre-date the war and can be traced to the turn of the century when the term was a widely used British slogan aimed in defiance at Britain’s challengers, notably Germany. British animal portrait painter Maud Earl (1863–1943) gave the term a popular appeal with her 1896 oil portrait of 'Dimboola' the champion bull dog. This painting, which was also widely reproduced as a print, features an aggressively posed champion British Bulldog standing with the Union Jack on the deck of a ship. In the background are the white cliffs of Dover and on the horizon are several warships, perhaps the gathering British fleet or possibly a looming German threat. The term was also commonly reproduced on patriotic postcards and posters bearing images either of a bulldog or lion flanked by a Union Jack. A well-recognised symbol of the British Empire’s defiance, strength and pluck, it was given a new lease of life during the Great War and Walker appears to have seen it as an appropriate motto for the 1st Division. Austin, *The Fighting Fourth*, p 10; and Belford, *“Legs-Eleven”*, pp 183 and 484.

personal administration, 103 transiting and seven days on logistics), nearly another quarter engaged in training (209 days: 40 days' individual training, 165 days' collective training and four days' combined training) and only just over half engaged in operations (552 days). Like Gallipoli however, nearly 90 percent of its operational effort was defensive (476 days), with the division spending 404 days in the line and another 72 days engaged in conducting reliefs-in-place. This chapter will examine these defensive operations.[2]

TO THE FRONT

By the time the 1st Division arrived in France the Western Front had stabilised after the brief period of open warfare in 1914. As the front stagnated, a series of defensive lines developed with the whole front extending from the southern corner of Belgium, through eastern France to the Swiss border. The front was almost 600 kilometres in length, with the northern 30 kilometres held by the Belgium forces, the next 130 kilometres held by the British, and the remaining 440 kilometres held by the French Army. The BEF's sector began in the western part of Belgium Flanders around the city of Ypres (modern Iser) and extended south across northern France to the valley of the Somme River east of Amiens, which in 1916 formed the BEF's southern boundary with the French.

The 1st Division, as part of the newly formed I ANZAC, began landing at Marseilles in late March. Its sunburned diggers entrained and were shunted through the French countryside north of Paris and deposited in General Herbert Plumer's Second Army sector. Initially they were billeted in the French villages around Hazebrouck, to the west of Armentières. As the division gradually concentrated it was introduced to the realities of the Western Front and its units were issued with many new items of equipment and weapons while its worn-out vehicles and heavy weapons were exchanged for newer items from the nearby British logistics depots at Boulogne and Le Havre. The divisional war diary records:

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[2] While it could be argued that the 1st Division's time on the Western Front extended beyond the 11 November 1918, this study considers all post-Armistice activities in Chapter 8. GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 28 March 1916–11 November 1918, AWM4, items 1/42/14–1/42/46.

> *The Divisional Artillery proceeded to Havre, together with Transport personnel of other units. Here guns, limbers and vehicles were drawn to replace those left in Egypt, and the Division was concentrated on 10th April in area Pradelle-Meteren-Outtersteen, with DHQ at Merris. This was the first time troops of this Division had been billeted. The billeting was well carried out, although in some cases unit and formation commanders did not realize fully their powers and responsibilities.*[3]

Nor was it only administrative lessons that the division had to learn as training commenced and a large number of officers and soldiers were sent to attend British schools of instruction on many of the novelties to which the division was being introduced.[4]

On 8 April the 2nd Division became the first Australian division to enter the line when it took over from the British 34th Division. Three weeks later, on 20 April, the 1st Division had its turn as it took over the Petillon Sector near Armentières replacing the 35th Division. At first one brigade went into the line, followed by a second so that the divisional front was held with two brigades, with the third in reserve. In this way the 1st Division was gradually exposed to trench routine while it became accustomed to its new war. While this was meant to be a quiet sector, it was also a sharp and violent introduction as the division suffered its first battle fatalities. On same day that divisional HQ opened at Sailly, 24 soldiers from the 9th Battalion (AIF) became the first members of the division to be killed in action on the Western Front when their billets were shelled by German artillery. Despite warnings not to advertise their presence, the inexperienced troops demonstrated a distinct lack of discipline and paid a heavy price.[5]

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[3] Admin Staff HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, April 1916, AWM4, item 1/43/15.

[4] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, March 1916, AWM4, item 1/42/14, part 1; Admin Staff HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, April 1916, AWM4, item 1/43/15; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 87–90 and 93–94.

[5] The 9th Battalion fatalities included Lieutenant Albert Fothergill, the first 1st Division officer to be killed in action on the Western Front and there were also two members of the 10th Battalion killed on the same day. GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 20 April 1916, AWM4, item 1/42/15;

The situation the division found at the front was one-and-a-half years in the making. The front-line separating the two sides had solidified and both belligerents had dug-in to protect their troops. Although this was initially seen as a temporary expedient, especially by the allies who were conscious of the need to eject the Germans from Belgium and northern France, the sudden change in conditions and the difficulty in overcoming the impasse led to a new type of fighting—trench warfare. Initially the British defences were based on the individual commander's judgement and interpretation of pre-war doctrine but the longer the deadlock ensued the more prescriptive became the requirements for trench construction, layout and the support facilities immediately behind them.

By the time the 1st Division arrived the defences it took over were standardised. Official instructions directed that the BEF's defences were to consist of three lines of trenches. The first, or front-line, was the 'Fire Trench'. Behind the front-line was the 'Support Trench' which was to be 40 to 100 metres further back. The third line was the 'Reserve Trench' which was to house the support troops and was to be 200 to 400 metres behind the Fire Trench. Although each of these trenches were continuous they were also interconnected by 'Communications Trenches', with one about every 100 to 150 metres between the Fire and Support Trenches and at least two per brigade front between the Support and Reserve Trenches.[6]

Pre-war British doctrine had stressed the importance of holding the forward slopes of high ground, which obviously offered better observation and fields of fire for the infantry and the supporting artillery. The firepower of massed rifles, machine-guns and quick-firing field guns had quickly swept this notion away. Dig, dig and dig was the solution or where that couldn't be done due to the high water table then breast-works were built-up with sandbags. The British also quickly learned that their field guns were vulnerable and they had to be moved back behind the line into 'dead' ground where they could not be observed by the Germans or engaged by their direct-fire weapons. The infantry also benefited by

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Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 92, 113 and 138–139; and Harvey, *From Anzac to the Hindenburg Line*, pp 109–110.

[6] GS Fourth Army, Fourth Army No 379 (G) 'General Instructions for the Organization of the Fourth Army Front during the Winter', 1 November 1916.

withdrawing to the reverse slope if this was possible and the defence came to rely less on the massed effect of rifle fire and more on the flanking fire of machine-guns and supporting artillery.[7]

All of this required coordination and the BEF slowly learned that the regular army's traditional regimental autonomy had to be replaced by tighter control by higher HQs to ensure that the defence was coordinated and that all units, as they moved in and out of the line, conformed to the defensive plan. Hence army HQ (an organisation that had not even existed two years before in the British Army) issued instructions on trench standing orders, the army artillery support policy, signal communications, and the naming and numbering of trenches.[8]

While the system of trench lines gave the Western Front its instantly recognisable appearance, this is something of a false impression. Even as the 1st Division was taking over its sector for the first time, the shape of the front began to change. In June the division was advised that it should look to establishing defended localities rather than trying to hold a line of trenches. This saw the beginning of a slow change in British defensive doctrine from continuous trench systems to separate, mutually supporting defensive positions. This change would accelerate in 1917 and by 1918 the trench lines were mostly a thing of the past.[9]

Whether the defences were a continuous line or the defended strong-points of later years, tours in the front-line quickly took on a routine. I ANZAC, in common with most British corps at this time initially contained three divisions—the 1st and 2nd Australian divisions along with the New Zealand Division. When holding the line corps normally held its front with two divisions while the third was in reserve, resting and training. Hence when I ANZAC took over the line the

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[7] The advantages of the reverse slope position had been recognised by the BEF early in its operations on the Western Front and an early and widely distributed précis noted that occupying a forward slope only invited destruction by German artillery. A copy of this précis was passed to the 1st Division in Egypt before the Gallipoli campaign. 'Extracts from Letters Received from Various Senior Officers at the Front', AWM27, items 310/15, 310/16 and 310/21.

[8] Appendixes A to D, 'Extracts from Letters Received from Various Senior Officers at the Front', AWM27, items 310/15, 310/16 and 310/21.

[9] Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, p 188.

1st and 2nd Australian divisions went in to the line side by side, while the New Zealands remained to the rear. Each of the two front-line divisions had two brigades in the line and one in reserve, nominally resting, although more often than not called upon to provide fatigues.[10] Within the front-line brigades only two battalions held the fire trench while the other two were usually accommodated in the support trench. The divisional area behind the front-line was divided between the formations. The two forward brigades occupied about two-and-a-half kilometres of front and from four to five kilometres of hinterland, with the reserve brigade occupying the area immediately behind them. The forward brigade areas were similarly divided between the two front-line battalions and the two in support. The support battalions did not usually man the trenches, rather they were billeted in farmhouses and cottages behind the reserve line where they could be called forward if needed. In the same neighbourhood was the HQ of the forward brigade, the brigade machine-gun company, some of the field company engineers and pioneers responsible for that part of the front, and the field guns of the divisional artillery. Behind the forward brigade areas, generally some four to five-and-a-half kilometres from the line, were the billets of the reserve brigade, the field ambulances, divisional HQ, and the dumps of ordnance and engineer materiel, rations, and ammunition. In the same vicinity were the horse- and wagon-lines for the field artillery and divisional transport. All of this was usually within range of the German heavy guns.[11]

Although the general impression of the Western Front is one of stagnation, the 1st Division's experience is one of almost constant movement. The BEF's armies may have only moved rarely and corps occasionally but its divisions were continually on the move. In the 1st Division's experience it moved regularly from one part of the front to another, with its brigades constantly changing over from the rear area to garrison the line and then withdrawing to

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[10] Variations to the two brigades in the line and one in support occurred throughout the division's service on the Western Front. For example during the winter of 1916–17 in the Flers Sector the 1st Division had all three of its brigades in the line while later at Hazebrouck in April 1918 it held it sector with only one brigade in the line.

[11] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, April 1916, appendix 13, Lt Col AH Bridges, 'Trench Standing Orders', 11 April 1916, and appendix 15, Lt Col AH Bridges, 1st Aust Div Order No 18, 13 April 1916, AWM4, item 1/42/15; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 95–96 and 113.

rest and train. Its units were even more active when holding the line as they constantly changed from the firing line, into support and then back into reserve usually on a weekly basis. During the normal seven-day tour of the reserve, support or firing line, a unit conducted a relief-in-place when entering the line and likewise at the end of its tour it was relieved by the in-coming unit.

The regular changeover of garrison troops became a feature of the division's defensive operations and the conduct of the relief-in-place, like most other tasks, had its own procedures. It was almost the universal practice to conduct reliefs at night in order to hide the changeover from the Germans. When the division handed over its sector it was usual for a complete divisional relief to be conducted on average over three days, depending on the number of brigades in the line. Longer and shorter reliefs were also common and if only a single brigade was in the line it was generally possible to complete the changeover in 24 hours. Normally one brigade was relieved at a time, usually commencing with the reserve brigade and then moving to the relief of the forward brigades. The hand-over of the sector to the new division routinely occurred on the third or last day, once the brigade reliefs were complete. It was also standard for the divisional artillery to remain in place until the hand-over of the sector was finalised and it might be several days to a week before the guns rejoined their division.[12]

When holding a sector of the front the division's tours varied between six and 102 days with the average being about a month (29 days). With the regular intra- and inter-brigade reliefs this meant that particular units would only spend about one week of each tour in the fire trench with the rest of its time divided between the support and reserve trenches and rear area.[13]

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[12] For example the 1st Division's first relief-in-place was conducted with the British 35th Division on one day (20 April 1916) as only a single brigade went into the line. Its second relief-in-place was with the 4th Australian Division but this stretched over five days (29 June–3 July 1916). Following the Somme operations the 1st Division moved to Belgium where it relieved the 4th British Division over four days (30 August–2 September 1916). On each occasion the incoming division took over responsibility of the sector on the last day of the relief. GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, April, June, July, August and September 1916, AWM4, items 1/42/15, 1/42/17, 1/42/18 part 1, 1/42/19 part 1 and 1/42/20 part 1.

[13] The 1st Division's first tour in the trenches was in the Petillon Sector near Armentières, which lasted 75 days (20 April–3 July 1916) but this was a nursery sector and the division was

Typically, a 1st Division infantry battalion spent slightly more than half its Western Front service in the rear areas and slightly less than half its time in the forward areas manning some part of the line. For example the 12th Battalion spent roughly 900 days on the Western Front and of this time just under half (about 400 days) was spent engaged in the forward areas. These 400 days were broken up as follows: 100 days in reserve, 120 days in support, and 145 days in the front line on normal tours of duty. This left only 35 days when the battalion was engaged in major operations. Of the remaining 500 days spent away from the front, this battalion spent 55 days in the rear training areas and the remaining 445 days in local training areas and on administrative tasks such as moving and rest. When the 500 'rear area' days are added to the 100 days spent in reserve, when the troops did not usually man the trenches, this means that the battalion spent only about one third of its time in the front line or support trenches.[14]

The degree of active fighting that occurred during the tours depended on a combination of factors: the proximity of the German line, the aggressiveness of the particular garrison opposite, the activity of the artillery on both sides, and the weather conditions. It was the artillery however, that was the bane of the infantryman's life and artillery fire was one of the deadly and demoralising constants of the division's life in the trenches. As one gunner officer recalled:

> *At one point in the line we had a regular routine. The Boche would throw a peculiarly noisy trench-mortar bomb into our trenches just as our men were enjoying their afternoon siesta. One of our field batteries would reply with half a dozen salvos of shrapnel over their trenches. They replied with ten-centimetre "Universal" in the direction of our observation posts. This would be my cue, and I would be ordered to drop a few rounds of high explosive into a*

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acclimatising. In all the division had 17 tours in the line totalling 488 days. Short tours (less than a fortnight) were usually because the division was involved in an offensive battle, while normal defensive trench tours were between 34 and 47 days, while the division's longest tour was its 102-day stint near Hazebrouck in 1918. GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, March 1916–November 1918, AWM4, items 1/42/15–1/42/46.

[14] Newton, *The Story of the Twelfth*, p 203; and 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 28 March 1916–11 November 1918, AWM4, items 23/18/7–23/18/37.

> *communication trench that the enemy were very proud of. Within minutes an equal number of corresponding shells would fall into the square of an unfortunate village a little way behind our lines. So the fun would continue, until we all got tired of wasting ammunition, and went to sleep again. This game was officially known as "retaliation," and is played with variations all along the line.*[15]

The reaction of the infantry, who were the main recipients of this 'fun', can be imagined and it is little wonder that the troops could on occasion dislike their own gunners as much as the Germans.

By late 1916 not only was the accuracy and timeliness of artillery support improving, the amount of indirect support was also increasing. In addition to its own guns, mortars and machine-guns, as each division entered the line it was affiliated with a heavy artillery group, which could be called upon to bombard enemy trenches, strong points and HQ. The growing weight and accuracy of this support not only accelerated the gradual thinning of the front line, it also increased pressure on the forward units to keep their opponents closely engaged.[16]

From late 1915 the BEF began a policy, as part of its attrition strategy, of mounting small-scale raids on the Germans.[17] This policy was in part an attempt by General Headquarters (GHQ) to end the unofficial 'live and let live' system that has sprung up along parts of the front, while it also had a more substantial role.[18] Patrols and small-scale attacks had been undertaken by local commanders since the start of the war for a variety of tactical reason. Now Haig had an operational aim of 'forcing the enemy to keep as large or larger garrison

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[15] FOO, *The Making of a Gunner*, p 171.

[16] SCRA, I ANZAC Artillery Instructions No 69, 20 January 1917, AWM27, item 303/40.

[17] David French, 'The Meaning of Attrition', *English Historical Review*, Vol CIII, No 407 (April 1988) pp 385–404.

[18] For the development and conduct of the 'live and let live' system see: Tony Ashworth, *Trench Warfare 1914–18: The Live and Let Live System*, Macmillan, New York, 1980, pp 18–19, 43–44, 60–66, 73–75 and 179–185.

than ourselves, and to increase his rate of wastage compared to our own.'[19] Unable to mount the sort of major offensive that could drive the Germans off French soil, Haig looked to attrition through raiding as a means of taking the war to the enemy.

As soon as the 1st Division's units took over the line they quickly discovered just what this policy meant. GHQ insisted on the constant probing of the German line with patrols and raids to both drain the enemy's strength and to help build up the intelligence picture of their foe. These operations, most of which but not all were successful, netted the division a steady haul of prisoners and put the Germans on notice that the 1st Division was not a 'live and let live' formation. Although the Canadians are credited with inventing the formal trench raid, this type of action was not unknown on Gallipoli although conditions on the Western Front called for a very different approach.[20]

The first raid undertaken by the 1st Division was conducted in the early hours of 13 June 1916 on a section of the Armentières sector near Le Bridoux held by the 50th (Prussian) Reserve Division. The handpicked 50-man raiding party was drawn from the 6th Battalion (AIF) and had been specially trained on a facsimile of German trenches, which was constructed at the divisional bomb school. The raid was supported by medium trench mortars and field artillery and the junior leaders involved included Lieutenants Austin Laughlin and John Rogers. Although several of the raiders were wounded, including the two officers, it was judged a success with the party bringing back a haul of six prisoners and the Germans admitting another 11 dead and 20 wounded.[21]

Laughlin and Rogers both survived their first experience of raiding and their subsequent careers serve as a useful example of how their success influenced the division. Laughlin had begun his AIF service as a soldier with the 1st Divisional Signal Company (AIF), serving on Gallipoli before being

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[19] Gen Sir D Haig quoted in David French, 'The Meaning of Attrition', *English Historical Review*, Vol CIII, No 407 (April 1988) p 387.

[20] Chales Bean claimed that the first Australian raid on Gallipoli was launched on 8 May 1915. Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, p 55; Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 214–215 and 192.

[21] Bean, *AOH*, Vol III pp 244 fn5 and 252–255.

commissioned into the 6th Battalion in November 1915. On the Western Front he was awarded the Military Cross (MC) for his conduct during the 13 June raid. In the following year he was promoted captain and in the final year of the war he was selected to attend the Junior Staff Course (JSC) at Cambridge, returning to France to be appointed General Staff Officer Grade 3 (GSO3) for the 1st Division.[22] John Rogers' career followed a similar path. He enlisted in the AIF as a private from the Melbourne University Rifles in 1914 and he too saw service on Gallipoli where he was commissioned just before the August offensive. From September 1915 he was the acting battalion Intelligence Officer and in France he continued in this role taking command of the battalion's scout platoon. Like Laughlin he was awarded the MC for his prowess as a raider. In 1918 when Laughlin left to attend the JSC, Rogers replaced him as divisional GSO3.[23]

Another typical example of these early style raids was conducted by the 1st Battalion on the night of 28/29 June. This raid was under the command of Captain Phillip Howell-Price, a highly effective company commander and the brother of Lieutenant Colonel Owen Howell-Price (CO 3rd Battalion AIF).[24] The raiding party included a total of 94 men and was organised into three storming parties (left, right and centre); two connecting files (left and rear); a covering party; and a reserve, which remained in the firing line along with the CO, Lieutenant Colonel James 'Cast Iron Jimmy' Heane.[25] The raid resulted in the capture of two German prisoners and 11 others killed for the loss of one

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[22] AWM8, item 22/11/1; and 1st Aust Div, Div Orders Part II No 93, 24 August 1915, AWM: Gellibrand papers, 3DRL 1473, item 94; AIF, *Staff Regimental and Graduation List of Officers*, April 1916, pp 34 and 295; AWM26, item 294/9; Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 252–254; Austin, *As Rough As Bags*, pp 153–154, 156 and 197; and AMF, *Supplement to the Officers' List*, p 153.

[23] After the war John Rogers returned to serve in the part-time military and during World War II he served with the 2nd AIF in North Africa, Greece, Crete, Syria and back in the Pacific where he was appointed liaison officer to General Douglas MacArthur and later became the Director of Military Intelligence. AWM8, item 23/23/1; AWM: Honours and Awards (Gazetted) Database; NAA: B2455, file ROGERS JOHN DAVID; and Judy Thomson, *Winning with Intelligence: A Biography of Brigadier John David Rogers, CBE, MC 1895–1978*, Australian Military History Publications, Loftus, 2000.

[24] Owen and Phillip Howell-Price were two of five Howell-rice brothers who served with the British forces during the Great War and three (including Phillip and Owen) were killed. David M Horner, 'Howell-Price, John (1886–1937), Frederick Phillimore (1888–1978), Owen Glendower (1890–1916), Phillip Llewellyn (1894–1917) and Richmond Gordon (1896–1917)', *ADB*, Vol 9, pp 381–382.

[25] James Heane later commanded the 2nd Infantry Brigade (AIF). See Chapter 7.

Australian killed and 16 others wounded. A simple trench raid such as this was supported by the division's guns firing somewhere between 2500 and 5000 rounds—more than six times the total expended for the attack at Lone Pine.[26]

These raids produced a number of lessons that helped improve the division's low-level combat skills. After a raid by the 9th Battalion (AIF) on the night of 1/2 July, which was largely planned and led by Captain Maurice Wilder-Neligan, the CO submitted a report highlighting some of the lessons, large and small, positive and negative:

> *Knobkerries were of little use….White bands are too noticeable if luminous paint is added. White calico is sufficient. Careful preparation is absolutely necessary and fullest consideration of all details. Parties should be separated and given special training for at least a fortnight.*[27]

From these efforts the division's minor tactics and combined-arms operations were honed.[28]

Variations were used to avoid establishing patterns that the Germans could exploit and so not all raids were 'noisy'. An alternate style of raid was the 'silent' or 'stealth' raid. Typical of this type of affair was a raid launched at Ypres on the night of 6 October 1916, about two hours after a noisy raid by the 2nd Battalion. On this occasion the 1st Battalion's raiding party consisted of ten volunteers who were to attack the German trenches at a position known as the Bluff. The ten men, without any covering fire, crept-out into no-man's-land. When one of the raiders was caught on the loose end of some torn German wire, the party feared the raid compromised and so two of the soldiers quickly jumped into the German trench and began throwing their grenades. A bomb fight ensued before

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[26] 1st Bn (AIF), 'Special Order of the Day', 30 June 1916, AWM 4, item 23/18/8; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 251 fn14 and 255.

[27] 3rd Inf Bde, War Dairy, July 1916, appendix A, Lt Col JC Robertson, 'Report of an enterprise carried out by three parties of 9th Battalion (Queensland) on portion of the enemy's trenches in Petillon Sector on the night 1/2nd July, 1916', 3 July 1916, AWM4, item 23/3/9.

[28] For a summary of some of the early I ANZAC raids see: Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 260–283.

the raiders withdrew carrying back two members of the party who had been wounded. Despite the casualties the raid did gain some valuable information, identifying a new German formation in the line.[29]

Noting the advantages of specialist training some 1st Division battalions went so far as to form semi-permanent specialist organisations of picked officers and men who trained and conducted all unit raids. In late July 1916 after its success at Pozières, the 10th Battalion's CO, the newly promoted Lieutenant Colonel Maurice Wilder-Neligan, formed two special 'Storm companies' and placed these sub-units under the command of two of his most promising officers. Specialist training and organisations however, could not always guarantee success.[30]

At dawn on 9 October 1917 Lieutenant Frank Scott led 84 men from the 10th Battalion (AIF) over Broodseinde Ridge and 400 metres down the gentle slope beyond to raid German positions in Celtic Wood. This raid was a diversion, attempting to convince the Germans that a major British attack on Passchendaele planned for that day, would actually develop on this part of the front. Typical for such a raid Scott was instructed to destroy any German gun pits and dugouts, capture machine-guns and procure identification and documents but events did not go according to plan.

The raid failed to achieve any surprise, with casualties falling even before the main party entered the wood and eventually only 14 wounded men made it back to the Australian lines. While raiding parties often lost heavily, the loss of so many men was unusual and the circumstances surrounding this particular affair led to it becoming one of the AIF's mysteries. Unusually the Germans did not

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[29] Small-scale raids without the benefit of indirect and direct fire support, that relied instead on surprise were termed 'stealth raids', while patrols armed with knives were termed 'silent deaths'. Brophy and Partridge, *The Long Trial*, pp 180 and 186; 'Historical Notes: 1st Battalion Silent Raid at Ypres, 6th October, 1916', AWM: 3DRL 3520, item 128; and GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 6–7 and 12 October 1916, AWM4, item 1/42/21.

[30] Robert Kearney, *Silent Voices: The Story of the 10th Battalion AIF in Australia, Egypt, Gallipoli, France and Belgium during the Great War 1914–1918*, New Holland, Frenchs Forest, 2005, pp 242–244; and Alex J Hill, 'Wilder-Neligan, Maurice (1882–1923)', *ADB*, Vol 12, pp 484–485. The 10th Battalion continued to employ a specialist raiding company at least until March 1918. GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, March 1918, 'Report on Enemy Raid on 10th Australian Infantry Battalion on Night 1/2nd March 1918', AWM4, item 1/42/38 part 1.

produce a list of survivors, dead or wounded, nor did they give a list of prisoners to the Red Cross, though this was the general practice. The German defenders—the 448th Regiment—made no mention of the raid in its war diary, another unusual omission. When the fighting moved away from the Ypres Salient and the burial parties could enter the area they found no graves, yet the Germans often marked enemy graves. Also, no human remains or pieces of equipment or uniforms, which might identify the 10th Battalion dead were found. Obviously the Australians were killed although the circumstances surrounding the incident remain a mystery. Tony Spagnoly offers the hypothesis that the survivors were most likely murdered by the Germans in retaliation for a number of successful raids that had recently been carried out against this particular unit.

Whatever the circumstances that surround the disappearance of the 10th Battalion raiders, the reasons why the raid failed are more concrete. The men were rested but they were inexperienced. In addition while the raid was supported by five batteries of field guns on a front of some 700 metres, the fire this generated was apparently so thin that some of the infantry were uncertain when the barrage actually began. This led the commander of the 3rd Brigade, the irascible Henry Gordon Bennett to complain strongly about the lack of artillery support. Not surprisingly this charge was refuted by Lieutenant Colonel Hector Caddy, commanding B Group, 5th Australian Division artillery. What it demonstrates however, is that there was no magic formula to ensure success and Haig's policy of attrition was a weapon that could cut both ways.[31]

Aside from raids, patrols were also regularly sent into no-man's-land to obtain information and to try and deny the Germans information about the British line. As British defensive doctrine changed and the continuous trenches of 1915–16 gave way to the strong point and zone defence of 1917–18, these patrols became even more important. As the British front-line changed extra emphasis was placed on the flanks and boundaries between units and nightly flanking patrols were sent out to cover the gaps between units. In addition units also sent out other patrols to operate across the unit's front covering the gaps

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[31] Tony Spagnoly, *The Anatomy of a Raid: Australia at Celtic Wood 9th October 1917*, Multidream Publications, London, 1991, pp 1–83; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol IV, pp 885 and 899–900.

between their posts. These patrols regularly encountered German patrols and short, sharp fights often resulted.[32]

While patrolling was often an unpopular task, it formed an essential part of the British intelligence effort. So even as signals intelligence became increasingly sophisticated and agent networks provided some specific intelligence on enemy troop movements in rear areas, senior army personnel universally regarded their most important source of information as that provided by their front-line troops. This information was fused with aerial photographs to produce accurate trench maps, while 'sound ranging' and 'flash spotting' shaped the growing success of the British counter-battery effort.[33] It was however, regular patrols and raids that provided a constant flow of information that helped to build-up a picture of German capabilities and shaped how the BEF adapted.[34]

1916—YEAR OF HARD LESSONS

According to AJP Taylor's evocative if misleading history the Somme campaign set the tone by which future generations saw the Great War: 'brave helpless soldiers; blundering obstinate generals; nothing achieved.'[35] This belief has been perpetuated in Australian military historiography where the trenches of the Somme are seen as the deathbed of the Australian soldier's idealism and the defence of the shell-torn village of Pozières is considered not so much war as wanton murder.[36]

While the 1916 offensive may have achieved little in geographic terms and it is true that the diggers' bloody defence of Pozières was a profound psychological

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[32] For a good example of this type of patrolling and its consequences see: 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 13 January 1918, AWM4, item 23/18/27; and Sgt Norman Longford, '1st Bn Patrol: No Man's Land Clash', *Reveille*, Vol 6, No 5 (1 January 1933) pp 16 and 28.

[33] For the development of sound ranging in the BEF see: Sir Lawrence Bragg, 'Sound Ranging in France 1914–1918', in Farndale, *History of the RRA: Western Front, 1914–18*, pp 374–379.

[34] John Ferris, 'The British Army and Signals Intelligence in the Field During the First World War', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol 3, No 4 (October 1988), p 44.

[35] AJP Taylor, *The First World War: An Illustrated History*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1963, p 105.

[36] Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p 168.

shock, this does not mean that nothing was achieved. War is a constant and bloody contest as both sides attempt to draw lessons from battlefield success and failure. The Western Front was no exception and the British and Germans were in a constant race to out-adapt one another.

Even as the 1st Division was arriving on the Western Front the BEF became aware that German offensive tactics were changing in response to the strength of the allies' defences. It is worth quoting at length a March 1916 letter from Haig to his army commanders which demonstrates just how aware the British were of German developments:

> *1. Recent German attacks have been marked by two noticeable departures from the methods employed by the French and ourselves in our operations last autumn.*
>
> *Firstly: The artillery bombardment has been concentrated in one effort, immediately preceding the infantry attack. Little seems to have been devoted to the registration of the heavy artillery, and, as far as our information goes, the bombardment had been of comparatively short duration but of the greater intensity.*
>
> *Secondly: No "starting trenches", close to the line to be assaulted, appear to have been dug. The enemy's infantry advanced direct from their own front trenches, even when these were 500 or 600 yards distant.*
>
> *…. The result of the combination of surprise and an overwhelming artillery preparation was that the infantry appear to have had little more to do in their first advance than to take possession of ground already practically won by the artillery.*
>
> *…. We must ponder over these German methods in order to determine, firstly, whether our present system of defence is likely to prove satisfactory in all aspects against such tactics; and, secondly, whether we can improve our own system of attack.*

> *2. As regards defence:-…. Against such bombardments as the Germans have recently employed it may be impossible to hold the trenches subject to them. The most effective defence, in such cases, is to have strong successive systems of defence, well supported by pivot points and "keeps" all well wired and so organised as to ensure good flanking fire; to be ready to hold the front trenches with few men but with machine guns, properly concealed and protected, in "islands" near the heads of communication trenches; and to be prepared to counter-attack at once with local reserves against an enemy penetrating the system of defence.*

After offering advice on what measures should be placed in order he noted that: 'It lies with Army Commanders to ensure… that the scheme of defence and preparations for the defence are in all aspects what they ought to be.'[37] While Haig and his senior commanders were aware of German developments and the implications of these, there does not appear to have been a consistent approach taken as to how to meet this challenge. This is because the innovation powerhouse of the BEF was at its lower levels and in mid-1916 there was no mechanism for capturing, synthesizing, promulgating and most importantly institutionalising battlefield lessons.[38]

Although the 1st Division came to France with considerable experience and it soon proved capable of holding its own against the Germans, this does not mean that it had nothing to learn. Indeed in some cases the division's peninsular experience actually impeded its adaptation and only led to higher casualties. One of the key lessons that the 1st Division discovered in the rubble of Pozières was the danger, already identified by Haig, of holding its line with too many troops in the face of German artillery. As was noted in the previous chapter, Gallipoli had taught the 1st Division to thin its line and hold troops in

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[37] Gen Sir D Haig, Secret letter 'OAD 522', 4 March 1916, PRO: WO158/19.

[38] GHQ did not establish a training directorate until early 1917. Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914–18*, pp 94–95; Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson, *Command on the Western Front: The Military Career of Sir Henry Rawlinson 1914–1918*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1992, p 294.

depth or reserve rather than crowding the firing line. On the Western Front this trend had to be taken even further. Following its tour at Pozières, Brudenell White wrote to Walker telling him of a conversation that he had recently had with the BGGS of the British II Corps, a corps which had occupied the line on the left of the 1st Division. White noted how II Corps was:

> *…very much surprised at the thickness with which Anzac held trenches. This will also interest you because, if I am right, you had the same opinion as I did,—that all our inclination was rather to go in too thick and to remain too thick. When I say this I am not going back on the principle of depth in which I am still a firm believer, but in this sort of fighting where you do not meet depth, but where you do meet a severe bombardment, it is essential that we should avoid crowding our trenches.*[39]

Walker noted the contents of this letter and immediately raised the matter for discussion with his GSO1, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Blamey.[40]

Fundamental to any organisational learning is the climate that key commanders foster with their subordinates. Innovation and adaptation can only thrive in an atmosphere of trust and in the 1st Division Walker actively cultivated that atmosphere. Walker commanded the 1st Division for more than two-and-a-half years on the Western Front, becoming the longest serving divisional commander in the AIF. In France he proved just as astute as he had been on the Peninsula, making no secret of his affection for his troops and this affection was reciprocated to an uncommon degree. One of his Australian COs described him thus:

> *Cool and courageous in action, possessing a military knowledge of the highest order, of distinctive attainments and striking personality. His motto 'What we have we'll hold' was lived up to by*

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[39] Brig Gen CBB White (BGGS), I ANZAC letter to Maj Gen HB Walker, 28 July 1916, AWM27, item 354/40.

[40] Walker's hand-written comments are on White's letter. Ibid.

> *the 1st Division, and there can be no doubt as to the personal influence he exerted.*[41]

It was Walker's influence and the relationship he cultivated with his staff and commanders that shaped the 1st Division's approach to war.[42]

The 'climate' that Walker encouraged was crucial to the division's ability in turning battlefield observations into 'lessons learned'. Even as the lead elements of the division were arriving on the Somme, and well before White's note, Walker's staff was seeking out lessons from the earlier attacks of the first phase of the offensive. On 14 July, nine days before the 1st Division's Pozières assault, Blamey issued General Staff Memorandum Number 54.[43] This document recorded a series of lessons drawn from the recent fighting of the neighbouring regular 7th and 19th (Western) divisions. Gary Sheffield has suggested that these divisions were picked because of their relatively recent success on the Somme although it is more likely that they were selected because of their proximity rather than any perception that they were above the average. Following quickly on from Memorandum 54 came a series of other divisional documents summarising further observations and a number of these were incorporated into Walker's plan for the attack on Pozières. Walker's background as a British regular and Blamey's pre-war training at Quetta can only have assisted this process.[44]

Turning battlefield observations into lessons learned and then making sure that these were translated into different tactics or revised procedures hinged on good staff work. Good troops die just as easily as poor ones if they are

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[41] Lt Col EE Herrod (CO 7th Bn AIF), quoted in Ron Austin, *Gallipoli: An Australian Encyclopaedia on the 1915 Dardanelles Campaign*, Slouch Hat Publications, McCrae, 2005, p 251.

[42] Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 468–469; AJ Sweeting, 'Walker, Sir Harold Bridgwood (1862–1934)', *ADB*, Vol 12, p 359.

[43] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, July 1916, appendix 7, Lt Col TA Blamey (GSO1), GS Memorandum No 54, 14 July 1916, AWM4, item 1/42/18 part 1.

[44] Gary D Sheffield, 'The Australians at Pozières', in David French and Brian Holden Reid (eds), *The British General Staff: Reform and Innovation c1890–1939*, Frank Cass, London, 2002, pp 115–116; and GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, July 1916, appendix 9, Lt Col TA Blamey (GSO1), GS Memorandum No 56, 18 July 1916, AWM4, item 1/42/18 part 1.

mismanaged and in France it was the mass of operational and administrative detail that often made the difference between success and failure. Although Gary Sheffield is rightly critical of Australian staff work in early 1916, the standards set in the 1st Division by Walker, Blamey and Cecil Foott (AAQMG) were not typical of the AIF or the BEF for this period.[45]

Blamey as the GSO1 and effectively the chief of staff for the division had the prime responsibility for the division's staff work and not only did he seek to incorporate recent lessons into the division's planning, he was also scrupulous in coordinating the other staff to ensure that all possible measures were taken to assist the front-line troops. As Blamey finished his two-year course at Quetta in 1913 he was granted a 'B' pass and was described by the Commandant in the following terms:

> *He came here uneducated (in a military sense) but all his work during his first year was characterised by a very genuine determination to overcome this defect. By the end of the first year he had succeeded beyond all expectations. During his second year his work has been well up to the standard of his Division both in quality and quantity. His views are sound and thoughtful and his judgement, in general, is good … He has always had the courage of his opinions and, as he has advanced in general military knowledge, he has expressed his opinions with greater freedom … A self reliant man who knows what he wants and means to get on … If he is not gifted with a large amount of tact he is not, in any way, conspicuously devoid of that very necessary quality.*[46]

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[45] Examples of poor Australian staff work in 1916 are common but two examples will suffice. At Fromelles in July the inexperienced 5th Division artillery shelled its own 8th Infantry Brigade (AIF) causing this brigade to suffer the heaviest losses for the division during this tragic attack. At Flers in November a delay in the attack of the 7th Infantry Brigade (AIF) by 13 minutes meant that the artillery barrage had already lifted from the German trenches and the attacking infantry was slaughtered. Bean, AOH, Vol III, pp 357, 378, 380, 400–401 and 911–912; and Wray, *Sir James Whiteside McCay*, pp 189, 192 and 208–209. Many British divisions were similarly plagued by poor staff work in 1916. Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914–18*, pp 23–25.

[46] Brig Gen WP Braithwaite (Commandant Staff College, Quetta), copy of confidential 'Staff College, Quetta Final Report', 19 December 1913, AWM182, item 1A.

His importance to Walker can be seen in the lengths to which Walker went to keep him. On two occasions in 1916 and 1917 Blamey left the staff to gain command experience at battalion and brigade level, both times Walker intervened and insisted that his chief of staff be returned because he was, in Walker's estimation, just too valuable to the division to be employed elsewhere—even in command.[47]

The staff however, were only part of the solution since their responsibilities were limited to assisting the commander with the formulation and promulgation of his plans. The success of those plans rested largely on the capacity of subordinate formation commanders who had to execute them. Hence, Walker had to rely on his infantry brigadiers and his Commander Royal Artillery (CRA) who commanded the 'building blocks' of the division.[48] By 1916 all of these senior appointments were filled with experienced men who had seen considerable fighting on Gallipoli and all had brought their commands to France.

When the 1st Division took its place in the line in April 1916 it was well served with experienced formation commanders. The 1st Infantry Brigade was still commanded by Brigadier General Nevill Smyth, VC who had already distinguished himself during the attack at Lone Pine. He would retain his command until December when he was promoted to lead the 2nd Australian Division.[49] Likewise the 2nd Brigade was still commanded by John Forsyth who had also assumed command of his brigade on Gallipoli and led it through the August offensive and the bloody debacle at German Officers' Trench. He would command his brigade through the severe fighting at Pozières but as a result of the intense artillery bombardments his health broke down in late August and he

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[47] AWM182, item 1A; and NAA: B883, file VX1.

[48] Peter Simpkins refers to the infantry brigade as the 'building bock' of the BEF and although his article relates to offensive operations his observations are equally true of the defence. Peter Simpkins, "'Building Blocks': Aspects of Command and Control at Brigade level in the BEF's Offensive Operations, 1916–1918", in Sheffield and Todman, *Command and Control on the Western Front*, pp 141–171.

[49] Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, p 538 fn26; and Ivan Chapman, 'Smyth, Sir Nevill Maskelyne (1868–1941)', *ABD*, Vol 12, pp 3–4.

was evacuated to Britain.[50] The 3rd Brigade was still commanded by the redoubtable Ewen Sinclair-MacLagan who would only leave his brigade in December to take command of the AIF depots in Britain before assuming command of the 4th Division in 1917.[51] The artillery too was well served and still under the command of Joseph Talbot Hobbs, the original and most experienced of Australia's gunners. He would only be replaced in January 1917 when he was promoted to take command the 5th Division.[52] It was a very strong supporting cast and so were their subordinates.

The battalion and artillery brigade commanders of 1916 were a significantly different group of men from those occupying the same positions back in 1914. The 'class of 1916' mostly began their service in the AIF as subalterns, with most having transferred to the AIF from the Citizen Forces.[53] A handful were also ex-soldiers and while it is true that the AIF was a meritocracy it would be incorrect to suggest that every soldier had a field marshal's baton in his backpack. The reality was commissioned officers required particular administrative, training and leadership skills and not every AIF soldier had these despite what some contemporary commentators might suggest. What was also different about the 1916 COs is that they were appreciably younger than their predecessors. A good example of these men is Owen Howell-Price, one of the three Howell-Price brothers who served with the 1st Division. A serving part-time soldier when the war broke out Owen immediately volunteered and was appointed a second lieutenant with the 3rd Battalion (AIF). He served on Gallipoli where he was appointed unit adjutant, promoted captain on the eve of

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[50] JG Williams, 'Forsyth, John Keatly (1867–1928)', *ADB*, Vol 8, pp 555–556.

[51] AJ Hill, 'Sinclair-MacLagan, Ewen George (1868–1948)', *ABD*, Vol 11, pp 616–618.

[52] AJ Hill, 'Hobbs, Sir Joseph John Talbot (1864–1938)', *ADB*, Vol 9, pp 315–317.

[53] The infantry COs at Pozières were (with decorations at that time): James Heane, DSO (1st Bn AIF); Arthur Borlase Stevens, DSO (2nd Bn AIF); Owen Howell-Price, MC (3rd Bn AIF); Iven 'the Terrible' Mackay (4th Bn AIF); Frank Le Maistre, DSO (5th Bn AIF); Henry Gordon Bennett, CMG (6th Bn AIF); Carl Herman Jess (7th Bn AIF); Graham Coulter (8th Bn AIF); James Campbell Robertson, CMG (9th Bn AIF); Stanley Price Weir (10th Bn AIF); Stephen Richard Harricks Roberts (11th Bn AIF); and Charles Hazell Elliott (12th Bn AIF). All but one had served with the Citizen Forces and began their service in the AIF as a field rank or subaltern officer. The exception was Jess who was a pre-war regular, while Weir remained the only original 1914 CO.

the August offensive and after distinguishing himself in the severe fighting at Lone Pine he was awarded the MC. Promoted major in September, he temporarily commanded the 3rd Battalion in the latter half of the campaign. Following the withdrawal he was appointed CO, promoted lieutenant colonel and during his service on the Western Front he continued to distinguish himself and for his leadership during Pozières and Mouquet Farm he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO). Although Charles Bean noted that Howell-Price was one of 'a particularly fine set of keen young regimental leaders' who emerged out of the fighting on Gallipoli'[54], the 3rd Battalion's chaplain later wrote of him:

> *He was never popular in the ordinary sense of the word. He took his responsibilities and duties too seriously to be ever personally popular with officers and men alike. But he came to be revered by his men, and it is probably true to say that he was loved and feared by them at the same time. There was no one who was harder on his officers, or who demanded more from his men than he did. His will and his courage, and his keen decisive mind dominated his unit.*[55]

And while he was only 26 when appointed to command, he was not the division's youngest CO.[56]

The youngest battalion commander to serve with the 1st Division was Donald Moore who on 1 December 1916 was appointed to command the 3rd Battalion (AIF) at the age of 24. His promotion came about because of the death of Owen Howell-Prince and Moore was to command the battalion for the rest of the war. In fact during the post-Gallipoli expansion of the AIF 16 freshly promoted lieutenant colonels were selected to command the new battalions and half of

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[54] Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, p 12.

[55] Maj BC Wilson, MC, MA, 'AIF Celebrities (27): Lt Col OG Howell-Price, DSO, MC, *Reveille*, Vol 6, No 3 (1 November 1932) pp 7 and 28.

[56] AWM8, item 23/20/1; AWM43, file A396; Wren, *Randwick to Hargicourt*, pp 45, 54, 152, 167, 171, 172–173 and 194–196; Lt GH Leslie (1st Bn AIF), MC, 'Wartime Reminiscences', p 12; and NAA: B2455, file HOWELL-PRICE OG LIEUTENANT/COLONEL.

these men were aged 24 years or younger. In contrast, the youngest 1st Division battalion commander in 1914 was 'Pompey' Elliott who was 36 years old, while the oldest was Lancelot Clarke who was 55 years old.[57]

Compared to the front line COs, the logistics COs were a slightly different group. Even in 1914 they tended to be older than their arms corps cousins and during the war they tended to hold their commands for much longer periods. Indeed the longest serving 1st Division CO was Lieutenant Colonel Jeremy Taylor Marsh. The English-born, British regular commanded the 1st Divisional Train (AIF) from August 1914 through until the Armistice, making him the only AIF CO to retain command of the same unit for the duration of the war.[58]

The 1st Division produced a large number of high-quality COs and while most of these men proved effective in command they are such a diverse collection that it is difficult to make anything but the most general of observations about them as a group. Most rose to prominence as subalterns or field rank officers on Gallipoli and were elevated to unit or formation command during the post-Gallipoli expansion of the AIF. The outstanding examples of this group include Henry Gordon Bennett, Harold 'Pompey' Elliott, Charles Elliott, James 'Cast Iron Jimmy' Heane, Iven 'the Terrible' Mackay, Owen Howell-Price, and Carl Jess. A few of these officers were loved but most were respected rather than liked and not a few were feared. While they were in uniform very few soldiers or subalterns would admit to actually liking their CO, although this attitude did change following the war when old soldiers could look back on their wartime relationships with a degree of sentimentality. During the war however, most of the 1st Division's COs were hard and uncompromising and they had to be since it was their job to lead men into mortal danger and their decisions got their men killed on a daily basis. It was not a job for the weak or timid and those who could not cope were removed. Their appointment was just too important, as Charles Bean noted when he observed that 'the Australian soldier is exactly

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[57] Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 12 fn24 and 47; AWM8, 23/24/1; NAA: B2455, file ELLIOTT HE; AWM8, 23/29/1; and NAA: B2455, file CLARKE LF.

[58] 'British officers: AIF Leaders', *Reveille*, Vol 5, No 1 (30 September 1931) p 5; and NAA: B2455, file MARSH JEREMY TAYLOR.

what his commanding officer makes him' and that the difference 'between any two regiments…was simply the difference between the officers commanding in them.'[59] It was these men who shaped the 1st Division and it was they who Walker and his brigadiers relied upon to fight their battles.[60]

For Walker, the staff and his subordinate commanders, the test of their relationship in fighting the division was not so much in how they managed the day-to-day tours of the line, which were largely procedural and standardised, rather it was how they weathered the unexpected shocks of war; and one of the best examples of this is division's defence of Lagnicourt in April 1917.

1917—STOPPING THE HUN IN HIS TRACKS

After capturing Pozières and holding it through severe German shelling and counterattacks, the 1st Division was withdrawn for a short rest. Another tour followed with fruitless fighting around Mouquet Farm. I ANZAC was then withdrawn north to the Ypres Salient. Here the division spent a relatively quiet 43-day tour in the line along the Ypres-Comines Canal. In late October it returned for the final phase of the Somme campaign as the offensive petered out in the mud and rain and it suffered a number of minor disasters at Gueudecourt. Over the winter the division stood three tours in the trenches.[61]

New Years 1917 was spent garrisoning the line in the worst European winter in 40 years. The 1st Division's diggers found these wet, freezing and muddy

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[59] Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, pp 95–96.

[60] *ADB* entries; AIF, *Staff Regimental and Graduation List of Officers*, August 1914, pp 13–24 and August 1918, pp 75–136; Bourne, 'Major General WCC Heneker: A Divisional Commander of the Great War', in *Leadership in Conflict 1914–1918*, p 58; Manning, 'Air Disaster at Canberra', *Stand To*, January–February 1962, pp 16–17; NAA: A11666, item 4148311; A1378, 202588; Horner, *The Gunners*, p 79; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 266 and Vol III, p 12 fn23 and fn24.

[61] After a nine-day tour at Pozières (20–27 July 1916) and seven-day tour at Mouquet Farm (16–22 August 1916), the 1st Division relieved the 4th British Division at Ypres and spent 43 days in the line in Belgium (2 September–14 October 1916). When I ANZAC returned to the Somme it joined Fourth Army and the 1st Division endured three tours in the line at Gueudecourt in the Flers Sector. These tours lasted 16 days (30 October–14 November 1916), 34 days (7 December 1916–9 January 1917) and 39 days (28 January–7 March 1917). GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, July–December 1916, and January–March 1917, AWM4, items 1/42/18 part 1–1/42/26.

conditions difficult to bear and rotations between the front, support and reserve lines were shortened sometimes to as little as 24 hours, although more often to 48 hours. The climatic difficulties were not helped by the requirement to garrison the front-line with all three brigades side-by-side rather than the usual practice of two. In early March the misery was eased as the 1st Division became involved in following up the surprise German withdrawal to their new defensive line known to them as the Siegfried Line but universally known to the allies as the Hindenburg Line. As the allies closed on this formidable defensive system the 1st Division was pulled out, rested and given three weeks in which to train.[62]

In April 1917, after its cathartic period of rest and training, the 1st Division was drawn back to the new front opposite the Hindenburg Line and involved in a series of sharp actions clearing fortified villages in the German outpost zone. When this was accomplished Hubert Gough's Fifth Army prepared to test the strength of the German position at Bullecourt. To allow the 4th Australian Division to concentrate for Gough's attack, the 1st Division on its right was assigned a dangerously long front of more than 11 kilometres, which was to be held by 'defence in depth'. More through necessity than design the 1st Division employed the new British doctrinal system and although the front was still being held with three lines, the first two of these were no longer a continuous trench system, rather they were developed as successive lines of detached outposts, each supposedly providing mutual support its neighbour. However, mainly because of the length of front, the system as practiced at Lagnicourt was more porous than intended with some posts not being able to even see their neighbours.[63]

The Germans, noting the thinness of the defence and hoping to disrupt British plans, attacked before daylight on 14 April. Launching a powerful attack with some 23 battalions including some of its new storm-troops, the Germans hit the

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[62] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, March 1917, AWM4, item 1/42/26.

[63] Gough's Fifth Army front of 17 kilometres was held by three divisions and in contrast with the 1st Division's extended front, the 4th Australian Division held 2500 metres while the 62nd (2nd West Riding) Division held 3700 metres. Bean, *AOH*, Vol IV, pp 355–358.

1st Division and the extreme right of the 2nd Division, where only four Australian battalions held the sector under attack. Although at some points the forward posts by themselves drove back the assault, elsewhere posts were overrun. Parts of the German attack even managed to penetrate to and overrun part of the gun line, which had been pushed well forward in anticipation of the Bullecourt attack. A number of guns belonging to the 2nd FA Brigade (AIF) were captured, throwing some gunners into panic and some German elements entered the village of Lagnicourt, about 3.5 kilometres in front of the Hindenburg defences. By mid-morning however, swift action by four battalions in support or reserve and vigorous local counterattacks saw the Germans thrown back.[64]

Australian casualties amounted to 1010, including 300 prisoners of war, with the 1st Division's losses amounting to about 700 of the total loss. German losses amounted to 2313 of whom 362 were captured. Despite the penetration of the division's line and the poor showing of some of its gunners, all of its guns were recovered and only five were found to have been damaged. In addition the artillery support provided later in the morning by British and Australian batteries was instrumental in crushing the counterattack. In all the field artillery fired 21,315 shrapnel shells and 13,264 high-explosive shells, while the supporting heavy artillery fired another 8283 shells. Tellingly the Germans also commented on the effectiveness of defenders well-handled Lewis guns, 'cleverly emplaced and bravery fought'.[65]

Although the counterattack at Lagnicourt was a relatively minor action on the Western Front in 1917 it demonstrates the strength of the new British defensive doctrine when managed by experienced and aggressive troops. The I ANZAC divisions were arrayed with a forward line of resistance—consisting of a front line, supports and reserve—backed by second line, a corps main line and finally a corps reserve line. The 1st Division had two forward brigades spread between the forward line of resistance and the second line. This left the third or depth

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[64] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 14–15 April 1917, AWM4, item 1/42/27 part 1; 'Report on the Enemy Attack on 1st Australian Division on 15th April 1917', AWM4, item 1/42/27 part 2; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol IV, pp 364–393.

[65] Bean, *AOH*, Vol IV, pp 393 and 399–403; and Jonathan Walker, *The Blood Tub: General Gough and the Battle of Bullecourt, 1917*, Spellmount, Staplehurst, 1998, pp 117–119.

brigade occupying the corps main line. The supports of the forward line of resistance were also supported by about a third of the division's 64 medium machine-guns. Although outnumbered by about four-to-one and stretched well beyond normal tactical standards the 1st Division swiftly and decisively defeated the German attack with a combination of small outposts manned by self contained platoons and backed by local reserves, which quickly counterattacked on the initiative of the forward COs and brigade commanders. The infantry in turn could generally rely on the accurate and heavy fire of their supporting guns. It was a clear sign of just what the division could achieve even when on the defensive.[66]

Following on closely from Lagnicourt the 1st Division was sucked into the fighting around Bullecourt in May as the Fifth Army clung tenaciously to a small penetration of the German line. On this occasion each of the 1st Division's infantry brigades rotated into the fight, operating under the control of the 2nd Australian Division in what was regarded as some of the most savage close-quarter fighting experienced on the Western Front. While the artillery played a vital role in keeping the Germans at bay, other newer weapons also played an equally vital defensive role.[67]

Typical is the experience of the 1st Battalion which was drawn into the fight between 3 and 6 May. The battalion's post-operation report notes: 'Great assistance was rendered at this time to the defence by Stokes mortar fire brought to bear…where the enemy reassembled for each attack.' Equally important, according to the CO, was the humble grenade: 'rifle grenades proving an absolute necessity, undoubtedly it was greatly owing to the range of

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[66] The Germans first promulgated their doctrine of the elastic defence in a pamphlet titled *Conduct of the Defensive Battle*, which was issued to all divisions on 1 December 1916. Although the BEF was more focussed on offensive operations they were only months behind the Germans in coming to the same conclusions about the vulnerability of rigid defence of trench lines. Nor was the German application of elastic defence an adequate counter to the BEF's development of limited or 'bite and hold' attacks. For German development of elastic defence see: Graeme C Wynne, *If German Attacks: The Battle in Depth in the West*, Greenwood Press, Westport, 1976, pp 87, 149, 159 and 191. For the 1st Division's defensive layout at Lagnicourt see: Bean, *AOH*, Vol IV, pp 355–358.

[67] Bean, *AOH*, Vol IV, pp 414 and 430; and GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, April 1917, AWM4, item 1/42/27.

these that the enemy were prevented from approaching our flank posts in sufficiently large numbers to rush them.' Even so the defence cost the battalion 49 killed, 29 missing and 240 wounded out of a garrison of about 19 officers and 400 soldiers. Losses among leaders were particularly high with the acting CO being killed along with four other officers, and another eight were among the wounded.[68] In all the 1st Division lost 2341 casualties in the Bullecourt fighting.[69]

In addition to the new weapon systems the signallers, while still primarily dependent on line for communications, were also the beneficiaries of new technologies, which allowed far more flexibility and improved command and control. As the Divisional Signal Company reported:

> *Communications were maintained with a high degree of efficiency under difficult conditions, as in these operations there were many casualties amongst the personnel of these Signal Sections. When the telephone cable communications could not hold, Power Buzzers and Amplifiers were used to great advantage.*[70]

The problem was that at this time the Germans had completely penetrated the main British front-line cipher and were able to read any of the intercepted Australian messages.[71]

Bullecourt proved to be the last major defensive operation for the 1st Division for 1917 and following this it was withdrawn into reserve (along with the rest of I ANZAC) and given an extended four-month period of rest and training. At the end of July the division moved north to the rear areas of Belgium Flanders in

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[68] 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, May 1917, appendix, Lt Col BV Stacey, 'Report of 1st Australian Infantry Battalion Operations During Period 28th April to 7th May 1917', 10 May 1917, AWM4, item 23/18/19; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol IV, pp 683 and 730–732.

[69] Bean, *AOH*, Vol IV, p 544 fn178; and GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, April 1917, AWM4, item 1/42/27.

[70] 1st Div Sig Coy (AIF), War Diary, 4–9 May 1917, AWM4, item 22/11/24.

[71] The Germans broke the British front-line cipher in April. John Ferris, 'The British Army and Signals Intelligence in the Field During the First World War', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol 3, No 4 (October 1988) p 37.

preparation for its first operation in the Third Battle of Ypres and this would literally consume it during the remaining months of the year.[72]

In November, following its participation in Third Ypres, the 1st Division, exhausted and bloodied, moved down to the now quiet Warneton sector near Messines. During the winter of 1917–18 the 1st Division held this area as it recovered its strength. In addition to garrisoning the line, resting and training, the division also redeveloped the defences in accordance with the British doctrine of zone defence, which it had already employed in a modified form at Lagnicourt. This doctrine was copied largely from the Germans and finally saw the abandonment of the old lines of continuously held trenches for zones built around strong points.[73]

By late 1917 the front-line was considerably different than when the 1st Division had arrived in France. The terminology of 'firing line', 'support line' and 'reserve line' were now gone, replaced by a Forward Zone divided into an outpost system, support system and reserve system. In general the forward brigades manned the Forward Zone with about a quarter of their forces in their outposts, a quarter manning the supports and the remaining half of the brigade deployed in reserve. Behind the Forward Zone the reserve brigade held the Second Zone, which was organised in three systems—firing line, support and reserve. Although these 'lines' were described using the old terminology they too were developed as lines of mutually supporting posts.[74]

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[72] During Third Ypres the 1st Division stood three tours in the line all associated with offensive operations. These included its involvement in the Battle of Menin Road (six days, 17–22 September 1917), the Battle of Broodseinde (ten days, 1–9 October 1917), and the Battle of Passchendaele (19 days, 24 October–11 November 1917). GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, September–November 1917, AWM4, items 1/42/32 part 1–1/42/34 part 1.

[73] GS GHQ BEF, *The Training and Employment of Divisions, 1918. Revised Edition* (SS135), GHQ BEF, January 1918; GS GHQ BEF, *Instructions for the Training of the British Armies in France (Revised Edition)* (SS152), GHQ BEF, January 1918; GS GHQ BEF, *The Division in Defence* (SS210), GHQ BEF, May 1918; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol V, pp 36–37.

[74] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, February 1918, appendix 28, Col TA Blamey, 'Defence Organisation. "C" Division Australian Corps. No 1', 28 February 1918, AWM4, item 1/42/37 part 3; and GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, March 1918, appendix 5, Col TA Blamey, 'Defence Organisation. "C" Division Australian Corps. No 2', 5 March 1918, AWM4, item 1/42/38 part 7.

The change in doctrine meant a considerable change to the defensive layout and for the units of the division this entailed constant hard work preparing their new positions. Each night these fatigues included wiring parties, digging and revetting of posts, laying duckboards, carrying tasks, laying and digging-in line for communications, gas proofing of dugouts, and preparing accommodation in the reserve area.[75] This effort went on throughout the winter as the newly formed Australian Corps held the line with two divisions, allowing one division to remain in support and the other to be held in reserve. Their efforts were completed none too soon.[76]

1918—YEAR OF PEACEFUL PENETRATION

In late March 1918 Private Arthur Traill, serving with his battalion stationed near Hill 60 in Belgium, wrote to his brother of his impending move south:

> *…as the big offensive has started and some divisions are going down on to the Somme. The latest report is that we all go, but you know what rumours are.*[77]

The offensive Private Traill was referring to was the German multi-army spring offensive code-named 'Michael' aimed at the British Third and Fifth armies. This was Germany's last desperate and reckless attempt to finish the war in the west before the arrival of the American armies tipped the balance irreversibly against her. It was also to provide the 1st Division with its finest hour of the war.[78]

When the German offensive was launched the 1st Division, as part of the Australian Corps, was hurried south from Messines to the Amiens area on the

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[75] 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 13 and 31 January 1918, AWM 4, item 23/18/27.

[76] Over the winter of 1917–18 the 1st Division stood two tours in the line in the Messines Sector, one of 47 days (17 December 1917–1 February 1918) and one of 34 days (2 March–4 April 1918). For the remainder of the time it was in reserve (15 November–16 December 1917) and in support (1 February–1 March 1918). GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, December 1917 and January–April 1918, AWM4, 1/42/35 part 1–1/42/39 part 1; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol V, p 34.

[77] Pte AC Traill (1st Bn AIF), letter to brother, 24 March 1918, AWM: 2DRL/706. Traill was later killed near Meteren. His brother Lieutenant Sydney Traill was also serving with the 1st Battalion at this time and he survived the war. AWM: Roll of Honour Database.

[78] Strachan, *The First World War*, pp 285–289.

Somme. Before it could be employed in that sector however, the Germans commenced a second offensive ('George') aimed at Bailleul and the vital hub of Hazebrouck.[79] On 10 April GHQ directed: 'The 1st Australian Division will move by rail from the Fourth Army to the Second Army on the 11th instant in GHQ Reserve, and will be disposed, in the first instant, by the Second Army to cover HAZEBROUCK.'[80] Two days later XV Corps was advised by a wire message from HQ Second Army that the '1st Australian Division is allotted to XV Corps but will be retained in Second Army Reserve for defence of HAZEBROUCK and will not be used by Corps without reference to Army Headquarters.' HQ XV Corps requested that the division's brigades be dispatched to their allotted areas as soon as they detrained. In the early afternoon in fine spring weather HQ 1st Division arrived at Eecke.[81]

Detached from the rest of the Australian Corps, the 1st Division was for the first time in nearly two years employed under the command of a British corps rather than an ANZAC. This stability explains in large part the 1st Division's progress and success culminating in its performance in the last year of the war. Enjoying a stable command structure, the division was fortunate to have remained for most of its time on the Western Front part of the same corps—I ANZAC—under its old chief William Birdwood and his chief of staff, Cyril Brudenell White.[82] This stability gave the 1st Division (and the other Australian divisions) significant advantages over British formations that tended to be moved from one corps to

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[79] Hazebrouck, located in northern France about 30 kilometres west of Armentières, was a crucial railway junction and major BEF line-of-communication base throughout the Great War. The railway lines that ran through the town carried about half of the daily supplies for the British forces in Flanders. Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, p 434.

[80] GHQ, Secret Memorandum 'OAD 811', 10 April 1918, IWM: Dawnay papers, 69/21/4, bound vol titled 'Operations Western Front 1918–19'.

[81] GS XV Corps, War Diary, January–April 1918, 12 April 1918, PRO: WO95/922; and GS 1st Aust Div War Diary, April 1918, AWM4, item 1/42/39 part 1.

[82] When the 1st Division first moved to France it did so as part of Birdwood's I ANZAC. After its strained experience under direct command of Hubert Gough's Reserve Army at Pozières the 1st Division was returned to I ANZAC remaining with Birdwood throughout 1917, including its service during Third Ypres. Over the winter I ANZAC held the line until 1 November 1917 when it became the Australian Corps. In early 1918 Birdwood was promoted to command Fifth Army and he took White with him as his MGGS. John Monash took command of the Australian Corps, while Blamey became his BGGS. Only Arthur Currie's Canadian Corps enjoyed better stability. Cook, *Shock Troops*, pp 378–381.

the next, making it very difficult to build up trust and understanding between the various levels of staff and their commanders.[83] Critically Walker still headed the division and Blamey was still his GSO1. When Blamey left the division a few weeks later he did so after 22 months service with Walker.[84]

Although the 1st Division became the orphan of the Australian Corps for the next four months it found itself in illustrious company. The corps was commanded by Lieutenant General Beauvior de Lisle, the original commander of the 'Indomitable' 29th Division and well known to the 1st Division from its Gallipoli service. Not only was De Lisle's old division under his command, he also commanded the dependable 9th (Scottish) Division, the 31st and 40th divisions, and the elite Guards Division. Even in this company the 1st Division's reputation preceded it as the Brigade Major 4th Guards Brigade observed:

> *…along the road came marching the lead companies of the 1st Australian Division, which had just detrained at Hazebrouck. Each company was over 200 strong. These magnificent troops advanced down the road, sometimes in a rather unconventional form of artillery formation, and most of them were carrying some unconventional equipment. They were superb, and their language, learnt on the sheep stations of their country and matured in a hundred engagements and patrols, was like the battle cries of other days. By itself it would have driven back any but the most determined enemy.*[85]

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[83] For the problem of divisional 'churn' in the BEF see: Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914–18*, pp 19–20.

[84] Blamey was replaced by George Wieck, an Australian pre-war regular and Boer War veteran. In 1914 Wieck was appointed Adjutant 9th LH Regiment (AIF) and after service on Gallipoli he was appointed brigade major to 'Pompey' Elliott and by Elliott's account he was an excellent staff officer, demonstrating considerable skill and moral courage, counter-balancing Elliott's more eccentric and mercurial behaviour. After leaving the 15th Brigade Wieck was appointed GSO2 3rd Australian Division before joining the 1st Division as GSO1. Chris D Coulthard-Clark, 'Wieck, George Frederick Gardells (1883–1973)', *ADB*, Vol 12, pp 482–483; and McMullin, *Pompey Elliott*, pp 182, 268, 271, 273, 279 and 291.

[85] Oliver Lyttelton Chandos, *The Memoirs of Lord Chandos*, The Bodley Head, London, 1962, pp 97–98.

The other advantage the 1st Division enjoyed when it moved north was it was once again serving under Plumer.[86]

As quickly as the division's brigades detrained they moved forward to establish a defensive line along the Strazeele–Merris spur, which screened Hazebrouck to the east, anchoring their line to the south on the Nieppe Forest. By 5.00 am the next morning, 13 April, the right brigade had three battalions in the line and the fourth was moving into position. The left brigade had one battalion and the best part of another in position and work was progressing satisfactorily. At 11.30 am divisional HQ opened at Sercus, although in the early afternoon it was directed to move its advance HQ to Le Grand Hasard and its rear HQ to Wallon Cappel. This began the division's longest tour in the line in France—102 days straight.[87]

Although the situation was initially quiet, except for some shelling of Hazebrouck, it was recognised that this was the calm before the storm. That night the divisional artillery arrived at Hondeghem and Cassel and Second Army authorised their release from reserve. In the late afternoon the 1st Division reported that the Germans had broken through parts of the 4th Guards Brigade and 29th Division to their front but they advised XV Corps that they would hold their 'present line at all costs.'[88]

By this time the 1st Brigade was in position covering the left flank north of Strazeele, the 2nd Brigade centred around Le Tirbanglais and when the 3rd Brigade arrived it was directed to take up positions east of Hazebrouck with its right north of the Nieppe Forest and its left about Borre. In the late afternoon, as the pressure increased on the British line, the 1st Division was tasked to take over responsibility for the prepared demolition on the bridge northwest of La Motte and responsibility for its destruction, if that became necessary, was

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[86] For the effect of the division's arrival see: General Sir Charles Harrington, *Tim Harrington Looks Back*, John Murray, London, 1940, p 71.

[87] The division's tour in the line at Hazebrouck lasted from 13 April to 3 August 1918. GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, April–August 1918, AWM4, items 1/42/39 part 1–1/42/43 part 1.

[88] GS XV Corps, War Diary, January–April 1918, 13 April 1918, PRO: WO95/922; and GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 13 April 1918, AWM4, item 1/42/39 part 1.

passed to the Walker. In the meantime as the units continued to take up their positions and dig-in, the weather turned cold and misty. Divisional HQ completed its move and just before 7.00 pm it advised that it had now closed at Sercus and opened at Le Grand Hasard. That night a party of about 100 Germans approached the Australian line northeast of the Nieppe Forest and were allowed to approach closely before being fired on by a Lewis gun post.[89]

Early the following day, in the pre-dawn dark the 1st Division stood ready and although relief of the Guards Brigade was not yet complete it was anticipated that this would be achieved before first light. As the morning dawned the 3rd Brigade troops could inspect the results of the previous nights' contact—18 dead Germans and three machine-guns recovered. Throughout the day the Australian line was heavily pressed and attacked in several places, especially around Vieux Berquin, and although one post was blown-out by heavy mortar fire and the Germans effected a local penetration, the line was restored. In the early hours of the next morning the relief of the Guards was complete and the following day was quiet as the troops watched-out under a leaden, cold sky.[90]

Throughout April the 1st Division stood firm halting elements of the German offensive in French Flanders where they defended Hazebrouck and the Nieppe Forest and it did so using the new defensive doctrine. Although much of the BEF was slow in adopting this doctrine, and this accounts in part for the initial success of the German March offensives, by April when the 1st Division joined XV Corps that formation was in operating in full conformity with it, developing its positions with forward, battle and rear zones.[91]

The change in doctrine coupled with the return to more open operations allowed the 1st Division to expand and intensify the type of minor offensive patrols it had

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[89] GS XV Corps, War Diary, January–April 1918, 13 April 1918, PRO: WO95/922; and GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 13–14 April 1918, AWM4, item 1/42/39 part 1.

[90] GS XV Corps, War Diary, January–April 1918, 14 April 1918, PRO: WO95/922; 1st Inf Bde (AIF), War Diary, 14 April 1918, AWM4, item 23/3/30; and GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 13–14 April 1918, AWM4, item 1/42/39 part 1.

[91] PRO: WO153/738, 'XV Corps: Defences'; GS 1st Aust Div, War Diary, AWM4, item 1/42/39 part 1; and Harvey, *From Anzac to the Hindenburg Line*, pp 222.

been conducting for the last two years. The success of these operations became legendary and while this spontaneous activity is usually attributed to the innate qualities of the Australian digger, the reality is that there were other factors at play. The first of these was British and German doctrine. Both armies had now abandoned trench lines because of their vulnerability to artillery fire in favour of a zone or elastic defence based around strong points and detached posts. While less vulnerable to artillery fire this type of defence was susceptible to an aggressive opponent if the battlefield conditions were right and the enemy could not afford to hold their line densely. The second factor was the topography, the open farming country around Hazebrouck being ideally suited to minor patrolling activities. The third factor was the improvement in Australian training that had throughout 1917 and in particular the winter of 1917–18 stressed the importance of low-level, combined-arms tactics and the training of junior leaders. The effectiveness of these tactics rested firmly on the foundations of the new platoon organisation and the increased firepower that had devolved to these same platoons. This correlation of factors combined to give the 1st Division an outstanding opportunity to display its capabilities. Designed to gain information, demoralise their opponents and advance the line without the need for large-scale attacks, these minor operations became known collectively as 'peaceful penetration'.[92]

A typical small-unit operation by elements of the 1st Division was reported to XV Corps on 17 May when at 3.00 pm:

> *Left Battalion rushed enemy post shortly after 12 noon today. Garrison of post was 17 of whom 5 were killed, the remainder escaped to the rear. Our casualties 2 wounded. Raid carried out by Officer and 3 men, covered by Lewis gun fire and rifle grenades.* [93]

Nor was it only officer-led patrols that engaged in this type of action. On 7 June the XV Corps diary notes:

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[92] Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI pp 32–33, 42 fn24 and 382–440

[93] GS XV Corps, War Diary, 17 May 1918, PRO: WO95/922.

> *…at 9:30 a.m. 3 men of the 5th Battalion raided an enemy post and took 9 prisoners and 1 Machine gun. Our casualties Nil.*[94]

Through constant practice the division's units continued to refine and improve upon the published doctrine in a way that GHQ and higher formations had difficulty in keeping abreast of. These efforts, as with other aspects of innovation in the BEF, were driven from below.

Although unable to keep up with the rapid development of minor tactics, GHQ did recognise that the change in battlefield conditions across the front had irrecoverably changed the way the BEF had to fight. At an army commanders' conference held at Hesdin on 11 June, GHQ cautioned:

> *The conditions of 1917 permitted us to concentrate a very large mass of artillery for offensive action, and our infantry became accustomed to look for lavish artillery support in all their operations. Today circumstances have altered, and it is no longer practical to concentrate artillery resources on certain portions of our front and to leave the rest almost bare. Infantry, therefore, must be trained to fight and to manoeuvre under cover of artillery fire on the principles laid down in F.S.R. Part 1., rather than to rely on the invariable support of a dense barrage. The forward movement of our infantry or the arrest of the enemy's advance can only be ensured by the effective and combined fire of artillery, machine-guns, rifles and trench mortars.*
>
> *It is of the first importance, by constant instruction, and by taking the fullest advantage of every opportunity for training, to inculcate in the infantry confidence in their own weapons, machine-guns, light trench mortars, etc., so as to accustom them not to rely on more than normal artillery support.*[95]

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[94] GS XV Corps, War Diary, 7 June 1918, PRO: WO92/922.

[95] GHQ, Secret Memorandum 'O.A.D. 291/33/1', 12 June 1918, IWM: Dawnay papers, 69/21/4, bound vol titled 'Operations Western Front 1918–19'.

Once again GHQ recognised the problem but it was up to divisional commanders to meet the challenge and to Walker the above observations must have appeared as a statement of the blindingly obvious.

The 1st Division remained part of XV Corps for four months, engaged in a spirited and active defensive campaign. By May German Army reports indicated that the troops 'most to be feared', and who were 'most courageous' were the Australian divisions, the Guards Division and the 51st (Highland) Division.[96]

During this time the Australian Corps underwent a final process of 'Australianisation' and many of the British officers who had served the AIF so well for a number of years were transferred out. On 30 June the 1st Division lost its long-serving commander when Walker transferred back to British service. It was an emotional end to his career with the division as he noted in his 'Divisional Order of the Day':

> *After nearly 4 years service in this Division, first as Commander of the 1st Brigade and for the last 3 years in Command of the Division, I am being transferred to another Command and must say farewell….*
>
> *No one can appreciate more than I do or has had better opportunities of appreciating than I have had the valour, initiative, steady self reliance and all those qualities which go to make a fighting man and a soldier which have been so consistently exhibited by all ranks in this Division. It has indeed lived up to the motto which it laid down for itself in its earliest days.*
>
> *No Divisional Commander has been served better, few as well as I have been and I am proud to have commanded you.*[97]

Walker was replaced by an Australian officer—Thomas William 'Bill' Glasgow.

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[96] Spedding, *Official Year Book 1937 (Coronation Issue)*, p 11.

[97] Maj Gen HB Walker (GOC), 1st Aust Div, 'Divisional Order of the Day', 3 June 1918, AWM27, item 354/1.

Bill Glasgow was a Queenslander who commanded the division from June 1918 through until its disbandment in March 1919. On his appointment he was unique in that he was the only Australian divisional commander on Western Front who had not started his service with the 1st Division in 1914. Rather, on the outbreak of war he joined the 2nd LH Regiment (AIF) as a major having seen long service as a Citizen Forces officer and having served in South Africa. On Gallipoli he demonstrated that he was a fine fighting leader and rose to command his regiment. Following the withdrawal he was promoted brigadier general, aged 40, and took command of the newly raised 13th Infantry Brigade (AIF) of the 4th Australian Division. He commanded that brigade throughout the fighting on the Western Front and Charles Bean described him as:

> *…the most forcible of the three strong brigadiers of the 4th Division. With keen blue eyes looking under puckered humorous brows as shaggy as a deer-hound's; with the bushman's difficulty of verbal expression but sure sense of character and situations; with a fiery temper, but cool understanding and a firm control of men; with an entire absence of vanity, but translucent honesty and standard of rectitude which gave confidence both to superiors and subordinates, he could—by a frown, a shrewd shake of the head, or a twinkle in eyes screwed up as if against the glare of the plains—awaken in others more energy than would have been evoked by any amount of exhortation.*[98]

Soon after his distinguished performance in the recapture of Villers-Bretonneux on 25 April 1918 he was promoted major general to take command of the 1st Division. If there was an ideal replacement for Walker it was Glasgow.[99]

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[98] Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 839–840.

[99] During World War II Glasgow was appointed Australia's first high commissioner to Canada. Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, pp 625–628; Ralph Harry, 'Glasgow, Sir Thomas William (1876–1955)', *ADB*, Vol 9, p 23; NAA: B2455, file GLASGOW TW; Maj Gen Sir JH Bruche KCB, CMG, 'Some Memories of Sir William Glasgow', *Stand To*, Vol 5, No 4 (July–August 1956) p 16; and Peter Edgar, *To Villers-Bretonneux with Brigadier-General William Glasgow DSO and the 13th Australian Infantry Brigade*, Peter Edgar, Canberra, 1998.

No sooner had Glasgow taken command of the 1st Division than it was recalled to the Australian Corps. On 3 August the division began the process of disengaging from XV Corps and at 10.00 am responsibility for the Strazeele sector passed to the 29th Division. Amidst a flurry of preparation three days later, HQ 1st Division closed at Wardrecques and began its move back to the Somme to join Sir Henry Rawlinson's Fourth Army.[100]

On the departure of the 1st Division, De Lisle wrote to Glasgow recording his appreciation of the division's performance and summarising its achievements:

> *Before your magnificent Division leaves my Corps, I wish to thank you and all ranks under your command for the exceptional services rendered during the past four months.*
>
> *Joining this Corps on April 12th during the Battle of LYS, the Division selected and prepared a position to defend the HAZEBROUK Front, and a few days late repulsed two heavy attacks with severe losses to the enemy. This action brought the enemy's advance to a standstill.*
>
> *Since then, the Division has held the most important sector of this front continuously, and by skilful raiding and minor operations has advanced the line over a mile on a front of 5,000 yards, capturing just short of 1,000 prisoners, and causing such damage to the troops of the enemy that nine Divisions have been replaced.*
>
> *The complete success of all minor operations; the skill displayed by the patrols by day as well as by night; the gallantry and determination of the troops; and their high state of training and discipline have excited the admiration and emulation of all, and I desire that you convey to all ranks my high appreciation of their*

[100] GS XV Corps, War Diary, 3 and 6 August 1918, PRO: WO95/922.

> *fine work and my regret that the Division is leaving my Command.*[101]

Nor was it only their superior HQ that appreciated the division's efforts. Early in the previous month the 9th (Scottish) Division wrote to Walker complimenting him on the support provided over several months and concluded with perhaps the greatest compliment one fighting formation can give another: 'Permit me to say on behalf of my Division that we sincerely hope that the 1st Australian Division may be on our flank when active operations are resumed.'[102] General Plumer also expressed 'his admiration of the work done by the Division during its tour in the Strazeele Sector and that the men should be told how sorry all ranks of the 2nd Army were to lose them.'[103]

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During its service on the Western Front the 1st Division spent the vast majority of its service holding the line. Although this was defensive in nature it was far from passive. Beginning with its first tour in the line at Armentières, the 1st Division set an example of aggressive patrolling and raiding that was not only in keeping with Haig's policy of attrition, it would also enable the division's junior combat commanders to gain a high level of experience and proficiency in small-scale, combined-arms operations. This set the tone for the division's service and by 1917, as the BEF's defensive doctrine evolved, the qualities of the division's COs, brigade commanders and staff in orchestrating an active defence reached new heights. By 1918 the 1st Division could mount a defensive battle that was capable of destroying its opponents.

On the eve of the 1st Division's departure from the Second Army, Plumer gathered a number of divisional officers and offered them his congratulations:

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[101] Lt Gen Beauvior de Lisle (GOC), XV Corps Memorandum 'No 128/28.G', 4 August 1918, AWM27, item 354/1; and GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, August 1918, appendix 9, 4 August 1918, AWM4, item 1/42/43 part 3.

[102] HQ 2nd Inf Bde (AIF), Memorandum 'G/5054', 7 August 1918, AWM27, item 354/1.

[103] 1st Aust Div, Memorandum 'G/5054', 7 August 1918, AWM27, item 354/1.

> *You know gentlemen that it is not my practice to make eulogistic speeches—there will be plenty of time for that after the war. At the same time I would like to tell you that there is no division, certainly in my army, perhaps in the British army, which has done more to destroy the morale of the enemy that the 1st Australian Division.*[104]

What is notable about these comments is that Plumer made them not after one of the division's great offensive victories, rather it was following a period when it had been (at least nominally) on the defensive. It was a mark of the progress the 1st Division had made in two years defending on the Western Front.

[104] Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, p 440.

CHAPTER 7

'WHAT WE GAIN WE'LL HOLD': OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS ON THE WESTERN FRONT[1]

It is the night of 23 July 1916, the 1st Division has been in France barely four months and it is about to launch itself in its first great test on the Western Front. The men of the '1st Divvy' crouch in their trenches on a night as filled with tension and apprehension as the eve of the Gallipoli landings. For all their success in holding the line in the north the diggers know that to win the war they must defeat the German Army and drive it from French and Belgium soil and this can only be achieved through sustained and relentless offensive action. Now they have been called upon to join the BEF's first great test as an attacking army. Over several weeks, in a series of attacks against defences around the ruined village of Pozières and Mouquet Farm the 1st Division suffers some 7500 casualties—more than 40 percent of its strength. It is a terrible introduction but worse is to come.

While the previous chapter examined the 1st Division's performance in defensive operations on the Western Front, this chapter will explore its role in the great offensives in France and Flanders, which only ended when the German Army lay vanquished in November 1918. In that time the 1st Division was transformed into one of the premier attacking divisions of the BEF. But for all of its bloody success the 1st Division spent precious little time actively engaged in these great offensives. Indeed the time it spent actually attacking the enemy—going 'over the bags'[2]—amounted to less than one month out of

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[1] 'What we gain we'll hold' was a variation of Walker's Gallipoli motto which he used in at least one address to the 1st Division in September 1917, on the eve of Third Ypres. Belford, *"Legs-Eleven"*, p 484.

[2] The AIF used the term 'Over the Bags' to describe an attack, while the term 'Hop Over' was also used to describe either a battle in general or an assault on an enemy position. Arthur and Ramson, *WH Downing Digger Dialects*, pp 103 and 148.

the 31 months it spent on the Western Front.[3] Despite this its Western Front offensives accounted for almost 40 percent of its wartime casualties.[4]

1916—THE YEAR OF LEARNING

On 1 July the 1916 BEF launched its Somme offensive as its battered regular divisions and the largely untried New Army and Territorial divisions attacked on a broad front the German defences on the northern side of the river. Initially designed to relieve pressure on the French, who were fighting desperately to the south at Verdun, it appears that Haig also hoped to achieve a breakthrough and force a return to more mobile operations. For the 1st Division it initially remained in the Second Army's Armentières sector acclimatising, considered too raw to be committed to the opening of the offensive. By mid-July however, it was entraining for the south to take part in the second phase of Haig's offensive. Now instead of a major break-through the British aimed a series of minor attacks to nibble away at the German second line defences along the Thiepval–Ginchy Ridge.[5]

On 3 July the 1st Division concluded its first trench tour, handing over to the 4th Australian Division. Although the division was at first directed to move north to Plumer's Messines sector in Flanders, where it was planned that I ANZAC would engage in a Second Army subsidiary offensive, these orders were soon

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[3] The 1st Division spent 959 days on the Western Front, of which 552 days were spent engaged in operations. Of its operational time 476 days (86 percent) were spent on the defensive, 34 days (six percent) were spent on other general operations, 18 days (three percent) were spent on support operations, and 24 days (four percent) was spent on the offensive. GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 28 March 1916–11 November 1918, AWM4, items 1/42/14–1/42/46.

[4] The 1st Division suffered 50,000 battle casualties during the war with nearly 20,000 occurring during the division's operations at Pozières and Mouquet Farm (First Somme) in 1916; Second Bullecourt, and the Battle of Menin Road and the Battle of Broodseinde (Third Ypres) in 1917; the capture of Lihons, the capture of Chuignes (Second Somme) and the fighting on the Hindenburg Outpost Line, all in 1918. *AIF: Statistics of Casualties*, p 15; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 593 and 802, Vol IV, pp 544, 789 and 876, and Vol VI, pp 684, 760 and 931.

[5] There is still debate over the strategic and operational objectives of the 1916 British offensive. For the various interpretations see: Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 219–242; Peter Hart, *The Somme*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 2005, pp 35–37, 64 and 65; Prior and Wilson, *Command on the Western Front*, pp 138–153; Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson, *The Somme*, University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2005, pp 45–47; and THE Travers, 'The Somme: The Reason Why', *Military History Quarterly*, Vol 7, No 4 (Summer 1995) pp 62–73.

cancelled and the 1st Division was ordered south.[6] Moving by train and then by route march, by 19 July divisional HQ was established at Chateau Lamont at Albert, 30 kilometres east-northeast of Amiens along the old Roman road that runs unerringly straight towards Bapaume. As the division took over the line the 1st and 3rd brigades relieved the British 34th Division and Walker's division came under direct command of General Hubert Gough's recently formed Reserve Army. Gough ordered the 1st Division, along with the 48th (South Midland) Division on its left, to capture the village, which had so far resisted several attempts to take it.[7]

Pozières stood in the path of any further British advance towards Bapaume and its importance rested on three factors. First, it was the anchor of what was the old German second line on that part of the front. Second, the ground to the immediate rear or east of the village stood on the summit of the Thiepval–Ginchy Ridge, so the possession of this ground would secure the flank of any major advance by Fourth Army to the south. Third, possession of this high ground, and especially that around neighbouring Mouquet Farm to the immediate north-northwest, would allow observation over the German positions around Thiepval from the rear—and so Pozières had to fall.[8]

The attack was launched at 12.30 am on 23 July. The 1st Division attacked on a two-brigade frontage with the 1st Infantry Brigade on the left and 3rd Brigade on the right, and each brigade advancing with two battalions 'up'. The attackers quickly took the German Pozières Trench, then pushed on in two further stages at half-hour intervals to reach the main road through the village. The German defenders were killed, captured or fled, some being chased by some over-

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[6] Pozières was the 1st Division's first major test on the Western Front, although this is not how it might have turned out if General Richard Haking had his way. Initially the 1st Division was earmarked to participate in Haking's planned attack at Fromelles but apparently Walker protested leading to the task being given to the even less experienced 5th Australian Division commanded by James McCay. The operation ended in a bloody repulse and the decimation of McCay's division. For Walker's opposition to Fromelles see: John Bourne, 'Charles Monro', in Ian FW Beckett and Steven J Corvi, *Haig's Generals*, Pena and Sword, Barnsley, nd, pp 133–134.

[7] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 7 and 19 July 1916, AWM4, item 1/42/18 part 1; and Bean, AOH, Vol III, pp 305, 324–326, 448 and 467–469.

[8] Hart, *The Somme*, p 297; and Prior and Wilson, *The Somme*, p 175.

enthusiastic diggers back to the German second line occupying a long low ridge lying 500 to 700 metres behind the village and known as 'Pozières Heights'. At dawn the Germans launched a battalion-sized counterattack only for this to be beaten back by machine-gun fire. During the following night the 2nd Brigade's battalions attacked and secured the rest of the village and three more German attempts to regain their lost ground under cover of darkness were defeated.[9]

The 1st Division had not only secured and held this important bastion in the German line but this was the sole sector of the front in which operations mounted by the BEF achieved any success. Two days later, close to the limit of its endurance, the 2nd Australian Division relieved the 1st Division on the night of 25 July. Back in the rear area resting, the casualties were tallied and training re-commenced and despite the terrible cost everyone recognised it as a significant achievement. Even Douglas Haig, rarely effusive about the Australians in 1916, wrote at the time that 'the capture of Pozières by the Australians would live in history!'[10] Once again the 1st Division set the benchmark for the rest of the AIF. So why did the 1st Division succeed at Pozières when earlier attacks failed?[11]

One Australian historian suggests that the key factor in the 1st Division's success was 'the quality of the troops', the division supposedly being fresh, well trained and experienced after its Gallipoli service.[12] There may be something in the claim about the quality of the troops and the fact they were rested but as for the others, these do not stand up to scrutiny. The 1st Division had spent less than three months in Egypt following the withdrawal during which time it had undertaken some rudimentary training but it had been focused on the expansion

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[9] For a detailed narrative of the 1st Division's attack see: Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 494–599. For a good account of one of the battalions involved see: Wren, *Randwick to Hargicourt*, pp 158–168.

[10] Gen Sir D Haig diary entry, 29 July 1916, in Gary D Sheffield and John Bourne (eds), *Douglas Haig War Diaries and Letters 1914–1918*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 2005, p 211.

[11] Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 489–482 and 593; Hart, *The Somme*, pp 302–306; and Maj Gen HB Walker (GOC), 'Report on the Operations of the First Australian Division at Pozieres' to HQ I ANZAC, 3 August 1916, p 7, AWM4, item 1/42/18 part 2 appendix.

[12] Peter Charlton, *Australians on the Somme: Pozières 1916*, Methuen Haynes, North Ryde, 1986, p 139.

and reorganisation of its new units. Training had to be rushed and was far from complete. In France, the three months spent in the north with Second Army were occupied with administration, front-line acclimatisation and only limited collective training. The artillery in particular was still extremely raw. As for the Gallipoli experience, the 1st Division never conducted a divisional attack during its time there—Pozières was the first time two of its brigades attacked side-by-side. In reality there were other, less tangible but telling factors at play and the first of these was the quality of its commander and his staff.

In accordance with the doctrine of the day the development of the division's Pozières plan was based on an 'Appreciation of a Situation'.[13] As we have already seen the 1st Division staff completed 'Appreciations' before Lone Pine and during the withdrawal and there is no doubt Harold Walker and his new chief of staff Thomas Blamey did the same on the Somme.[14] Walker developed the concept for the attack, sketching an outline, which included his key requirements such as the timing and direction of the assault and the support needed. It was Walker who decided that the 1st Division was to launch from southeast of the village, that the frontage allotted to the attack required two brigades, and it was at his insistence that the assault should be no more than 200 yards.[15] To get his way he had first to convince Gough and the staff of the Reserve Army.[16] Having gained approval for his concept it was then Blamey's task to fill in the details and produce workable orders for the assault.[17]

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[13] See: Précis, 'Appreciation of a Situation', nd, AWM27, item 310/24; and ABBA, 'The "Intention" in Operation Orders', *Commonwealth Military Journal* (December 1911) pp 773–778.

[14] Blamey had only just taken over from Arthur Bridges on 10 July 1916. On leaving the 1st Division Bridges was appointed GSO1 2nd Australian Division. NAA: B2455, file BRIDGES AH.

[15] Walker's report on the battle is written in the first person and it is clear that he either dictated the account or it was typed from his written notes. In it he makes clear that he chose the direction of attack, decided on the short assault distance and the need to attack on a two-brigade frontage. Maj Gen HB Walker (GOC), 'Report on the Operations of the First Australian Division at Pozieres' to HQ I ANZAC, 3 August 1916, p 7, AWM4, item 1/42/18 part 2 appendix 19.

[16] According to Gary Sheffield, Walker had to enlist the aid of 'Moses' Beddington, a trusted Reserve Army staff officer to convince Gough to allow him to implement his plan rather than do what Gough wanted. Sheffield, 'An Army Commander on the Somme: Hubert Gough', in Sheffield and Todman, *Command and Control on the Western Front*, p 71.

[17] Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 469, 483–485, 532 and 533.

The orders for the 1st Division's operation were issued on 21 July under Blamey's signature. These three-page orders followed the standard doctrinal format opening with the task: 'The division will attack the enemy at zero hour', with 'Zero' to be advised. The task was followed by some general 'Information' outlining the broad picture of the neighbouring friendly forces, followed by a more detailed assessment of the German forces opposing the division. The bulk of the orders then dealt with the crucial coordinating instructions including the 'Frontage of Attack', the 'Objectives' to be seized, the actual tactics or 'Method of Attack', 'Artillery' support, 'Consolidation' of the objectives and the use of the 'Divisional Reserve'. The orders concluded with instructions on 'Signal Communications', the location of Walker's HQ and the requirement for all addressees to acknowledge the receipt of their copy of the orders. A map was attached indicating the barrage lines to be fired and the timings for each.[18] Several supplementary orders clarifying the timing of the attack, amending some details and stipulating the synchronisation of watches followed. The final orders also contained a revised barrage map.[19]

Walker's plan and Blamey's staff work were fundamental to the 1st Division's success. Walker drew upon a combination of his Gallipoli experience and the observations of other British formations to formulate his plan. Already at Gallipoli the waspish Englishman had insisted on reducing the assault distance for his troops in the attack on Lone Pine and in France the necessity of this was reconfirmed on the advice of neighbouring British divisions.[20] Walker also made the decision to attack from the southeast, an unexpected direction, or at least not the same direction used in the previous, failed attacks. And once Blamey crafted the orders, Walker insisted that:

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[18] Lt Col TA Blamey (GSO1), 'First Australian Division Order No 31', 21 July 1916, AWM4 item 1/42/18 part 1 appendix 13.

[19] Lt Col TA Blamey (GSO1), 'First Australian Division Orders No 32–34', 21–22 July 1916, AWM4 item 1/42/18 part 1 appendix 14.

[20] A short assault at night and the decision to move his assault troops into no-man's-land before the attack was taken by Walker after reviewing the observations of some neighbouring divisions involved in earlier attacks on the Somme. Lt Col TA Blamey (GSO1), 1st Aust Div GS Memorandums No 54 and No 56, 14 and 18 July 1916, AWM4, item 1/42/18 part 1 appendices 7 and 9.

> *The detailed plan should be fully explained to all concerned and they should be made particularly to understand the exact place they must gain in each advance and their action on arrival, i.e. whether to consolidate, to organise and prepare a second advance etc.*[21]

Hence the troops were being asked to do more than just obey orders and follow the barrage; rather they were expected to understand their commander's intent.

This degree of thorough preparation took time especially for a newly arrived division. It was not until midnight on 17 July that orders were received indicating the 1st Division's tasks:

> *The I ANZAC Corps, consisting of 1st, 2nd, and 4th Australian Divisions, was placed under the orders of the G.O.C. Reserve Army* [and immediately]*…. 1st Australian Division was temporarily placed directly under the order of the Reserve Army with a view to executing an attack on POZIERES.*[22]

On the following day Gough issued a terse verbal warning order to Walker telling him that he wanted 1st Division to attack on the following night.[23] Fortunately Walker insisted on more time to prepare and with the backing of Birdwood and White he was granted an extension. Clearly he had already made the most of the division's time in transit and four of the division's memoranda outlining recent lessons obtained from neighbouring British divisions had

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[21] Lt Col TA Blamey (GSO1), 1st Aust Div GS Memorandum No 56, 18 July 1916, para 2, AWM4, item 1/42/18 part 1 appendix 9.

[22] GS Reserve Army, War Diary, 18 July 1916, PRO: WO95/518.

[23] According to the Charles Bean, Gough told Walker on the day the division arrived, 'I want you to go into the line and attack Pozières tomorrow night!' Walker was appalled and refused to be rushed into a premature attack against a strongly held position. He stood up to Gough, a known bully and 'thruster', and forcefully argued for more time to prepare, more artillery support and for the right to attack from the direction of his choosing. Gough however, was not the only senior British commander who failed to allow sufficient time for battle preparation and many failures on the Somme were caused by a combination of poor staff work and rushed operations. Bean, *Two Men I Knew*, p 134; Sheffield, 'An Army Commander on the Somme: Hubert Gough', in Sheffield and Todman, *Command and Control on the Western Front*, pp 71–72; and Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914–18*, pp 22–25.

already been issued.[24] Even so Walker still needed to conduct a reconnaissance, develop his plan and issue orders. This took three days (19–21 July) with the divisional orders being issued at 3.30 am on 21 July.[25] The supplementary orders followed at 4.00 pm and midnight on the same day.[26] It was not until 11:50 pm on the same day that the Reserve Army actually issued its orders; the inauspiciously numbered 'Operation Order No. 13 for [the] attack on POZIERES on the night of July 22nd/23rd'.[27] This order outlined the division's task with a mix of generalisations and specifics:

> *The 1st Australian Division will attack the trench south of POZIERES in squares X.5.c. and X.4.d. and c., and the trenches running north in X.5. This line will at once be consolidated when gained.*
>
> *As the barrage lifts the line will be carried forward and established on the BAPAME Road, if the village is not too strongly held.*
>
> *This line must be strongly consolidated before any flank advance is attempted. Should it be found possible to take the main portion of the village, north of the road, the right must be worked forward along, and east of, the German 2nd Line trenches and ample time must be allowed for the artillery to make the necessary preparation.*[28]

Having received formal orders from his superior Walker issued his final supplementary order at noon on 22 July, just 12 hours before Zero. It has to be conceded that just five days from the first warning order to the launch of a

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[24] Lt Col TA Blamey (GSO1), 1st Aust Div GS Memorandum Nos 54–57, 14–18 July 1916, AWM4, item 1/42/18 part 1 appendices 7–10.

[25] Lt Col TA Blamey (GSO1), 'First Australian Division Order No 31', 21 July 1916, AWM4 item 1/42/18 part 1 appendix 13.

[26] Lt Col TA Blamey (GSO1), 'First Australian Division Orders No 32 and 33', 21 July 1916, AWM4 item 1/42/18 part 1 appendices 14 and 15.

[27] GS Reserve Army, War Diary, 21 July 1916, PRO: WO95/518.

[28] HQ Reserve Army, 'SG 21/0/4—Reserve Army Operation Order No 13', 21 July 1916, PRO: WO95/518.

divisional attack was a good effort especially considering the requirement to prepare the fire plan.[29]

The second factor working in favour of the attackers was the strength of the fire support. For the attack on Pozières the 1st and 48th divisions were supported by a substantial concentration of artillery. Unlike the desultory affairs on the Peninsula, the bombardment at Pozières began on 19 July and included, in addition to the six brigades of field artillery organic to the attacking divisions; support by the guns of the British 25th Division; and the bulk of the X Corps medium and heavy guns. These corps assets consisted of the XLV Heavy Artillery Group, comprising the British 36th and 108th Siege Batteries, and the Australian 55th Siege Battery. This formidable support was orchestrated by the division's dependable artillery commander Joseph Talbot Hobbs but given the relative complexity of the fire support, Brigadier General Charles Owen-Cunliffe (CRA I ANZAC) also became involved to avoid a possible major friendly fire accident.[30]

On the evening before the attack a 1st Division subaltern noted as he moved up to the line:

> *There was a terrible bombardment of the Huns' trenches by our artillery during the night. Very interesting to watch from a safe distance.*[31]

Not only was it important that the objectives be pulverised prior to the attack, Walker's plan hinged on the close cooperation between his infantry and gunners. In his orders he directed:

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[29] Sheffield, 'An Army Commander on the Somme: Hubert Gough', in Sheffield and Todman, *Command and Control on the Western Front*, p 71; Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, p 468; and GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 21, 22 and 23 July 1916, AWM4, item 1/42/18 part 1.

[30] Coombes, *The Lionheart*, pp 113–128; GS HQ 1st Aust Div, 'First Australian Division Order No 31', 21 July 1916, AWM4, item 1/42/18 part 1; Miles, *BOH: Military Operations, France and Belgium*, 1916 Vol II, p 142 fn1; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 484–485, 491 and 571 fn49.

[31] Lt M Abson (6th Bn AIF), quoted in Austin, *As Rough As Bags*, p 162.

> *As soon as the bombardment begins the infantry will move forward as near as possible to the hostile trenches. As soon as the bombardment lifts, the trenches will be rushed.*[32]

In this way the infantry were to 'hug' the barrage and reduce the amount of time between the lifting of the fire and their arrival on the objective; the aim being to deny the Germans the opportunity to leave their deep dugouts and occupy the trenches before the attacking infantry arrived on top of them. In this can be seen an early experiment that would eventually lead to the development of the 'creeping barrage' and it succeeded brilliantly. Walker was to attribute the division's success in large part to:

> *The accurate shooting of the Divisional Artillery. Prior to the assault the men were able to get within 50 yards of the barrage. The barrage was most effective.*[33]

This Australian and British fire was, according to Charles Bean, 'famous even among the many famous bombardments on the Western Front'.[34]

Although the assault bore some of the features of Walker's planning at Lone Pine, Pozières was very different from the wild infantry charges of Gallipoli, exhibiting a more a combined-arms flavour. Aside from the close coordination with the artillery, each infantry brigade was also allocated an engineer liaison officer, normally the second-in-command of the affiliated field company. Parties of sappers and pioneers accompanied the assaulting infantry so that no time was lost in consolidating the position. Hence by 2.30 am as the new front-line was reached the 1st, 2nd and 3rd field companies, assisted by two other AIF field companies, commenced work on the new trenches and strong-points. Captain Geoffrey Drake Brockman recorded how this worked in one battalion:

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[32] Lt Col TA Blamey (GSO1), 'First Australian Division Order No 31', 21 July 1916, p 2, AWM4, item 1/42/18 part 1 appendix 13.

[33] Maj Gen HB Walker (GOC), 'Report on the Operations of the First Australian Division at Pozieres' to HQ I ANZAC, 3 August 1916, p 7, AWM4, item 1/42/18 part 2 appendix 19.

[34] Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, p 494.

> *Lieutenant-Colonel AB Stevens (OC 2nd Battalion), Major Mather, Lieutenant JEG Stevenson and I made a quick reconnaissance. It was decided to advance the line and dig a new trench at once, in daylight, thus gaining respite from immediate shelling. Major Mather and I picked out the line; we stretched a white tape over the ground to mark it…. The hundreds of men appeared running to our tape. They began digging for dear life…. But the snipers now had hundreds of targets amongst the trench-diggers, and many were hit. Half the 2nd Field Company of engineers were both directing and digging at the same time….*[35]

This was a sign of the growing sophistication of the division's offensive operations based not just on the infantry, artillery and engineers, rather it was rooted in the closer cooperation of this battlefield trinity.[36]

The 1st Division was also favoured by an element of luck. At the time of the 1st Division's attack the German command was in the process of replacing the division which had held Pozières from the beginning of the Somme offensive with a fresh formation brought south from Ypres. Unfortunately for them the tired and battered troops were still in occupation of the southeast sector of the village and as they took the brunt of the 1st Division's attack, they gave way. There was however, no such collapse in the Old German lines to the north of the village. Here during further attacks on 24 and 25 July the attacking battalions ran into heavy machine-gun fire and could make little progress. Reinforcing battalions had no more success. A few hundred metres of trenches were captured but by that time the brigades were at the end of their endurance.[37]

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[35] Geoffrey Drake-Brockman, *The Turning Wheel*, Paterson Brokensha, Perth, 1960, p 104.

[36] McNicoll, *Making and Breaking*, p 69.

[37] For the state of the German defences see: Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 520–524. For the problems of the subsequent attacks see: Brig Gen E Sinclair-MacLagan (GOC 3rd Inf Bde AIF), 'Report on Operations about Pozières 19th–26th July, 1916', 30 July 1916, AWM4, item 23/3/9 appendix Z; Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 550–585; and Prior and Wilson, *The Somme*, pp 176–177.

Despite the problems to the north, the division captured nearly all its objectives and as a result the Germans directed their efforts at trying to drive back and recover the lost ground. Beginning at 7.00 am on 24 July their preparatory fire drew on the guns of nearly every unit within range of the narrow salient. The constant and methodical pounding the division took over the next three days was worse than anything Australian troops had previously experienced and inflicted casualties far in excess of the losses suffered in the original attack. Casualties, while moderate during the initial assault, mounted in the face of the German fire and in just three days fighting the division lost 5285 men. Its relief on 26 July led to a short reprieve and then another tour on the Somme followed. On 15 August the division entered the fruitless fighting around Mouquet Farm only to be relieved again by the 2nd Division on 22 August.[38]

In comparison with the plans and conduct of the operation at Pozières, Mouquet Farm was a disaster. When the division returned to the line it was at two-thirds strength and many of the officers and men were inexperienced replacements, while the veterans were still recovering from the psychological shock of Pozières. Furthermore the planning for the sequential brigade attacks, each on a narrow front, was inadequate and the fire support for each attack insufficient. In the end the attacks were uncoordinated, costly in casualties—amounting to another 92 officers and 2558 soldiers—and the results 'trifling'.[39] What did these operations demonstrate? Simply that troops could be pushed too far and operations protracted beyond a point when the results were worth the cost. It was an example of the immaturity of the BEF's senior commanders and the 1st Division paid the price.[40]

Australian historians often take a narrowly parochial view of the fighting on the Somme. Reading some accounts it could be easily forgotten that the AIF was

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[38] Maj GC Somerville (for GOC 1st Aust Div), 'Statement of Actual Casualties in the Field from Noon 22nd July 1916 to Noon 29th July 1916', 30 July 1916, AWM4, item 1/43/18 appendix X; Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 771–802; and Prior and Wilson, *The Somme*, pp 179–184.

[39] Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, pp 771 and 802.

[40] For example the 3rd Brigade had barely 24 hours to prepare for its attack. Brig Gen E Sinclair-MacLagan (GOC 3rd Inf Bde AIF), 'Report on Operations About Mouquet Farm and Pozières 19th to 23rd August 1916', 27 August 1916, AWM4, item 23/3/10

only a small part of a much larger British and French effort. Nor do many accounts accurately reflect the share of the burden the Australian divisions bore. The 1st Division served about the average amount of time in the front-line as the other British and Australian divisions on the Somme, spending 29 days at the front between 1 July and 23 November 1916. Many other British divisions spent double this amount of time, although they were usually holding quieter defensive sectors. Also the casualties suffered by the 1st Division, while heavy and tragic, were hardly unique. The years' fighting on the Somme cost the 1st Division a total of 7654 casualties—this is about the average for the 41 British divisions that fought in similar circumstances on the Somme.[41]

After its hammering on the Somme I ANZAC and the 1st Division was 'rested' in the relatively quiet Ypres Salient. They returned to the Somme to play a small but sad role in the final phases of the campaign. These minor operations demonstrate that the 1st Division's diggers were not invincible and if thrown into hastily conceived operations they could be defeated just like any other troops. A typical example of these wasteful and largely unproductive operations was the attack at Flers on morning of 5 November. The 1st Brigade was to conduct an attack on the Germans in Hilt Trench, which rested on the reverse slopes of the ridge. The brigade attacked with two battalions 'up', with the assault companies formed up in two waves of half companies, ten yards apart, with their bombers in the front line and the Lewis guns in the second line. The whole attack was to occur under the cover of a creeping barrage that advanced at a rate of 50 yards per minute.[42]

Things went array from the start. The attack was launched but the barrage moved too quickly for troops who were already tired following a long march through mud to their assembly positions. The assault was also 'very heavy' going due to torrential rain before the attack.[43] The attack failed as the troops floundered in the mud and were subject to heavy machine-gun and rifle fire, and

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[41] 'Statement Showing Number of Days Each Division has been in the Front Line in Somme Battle'. From 1st July to 23rd Nov, 1916', PRO: WO148/19; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol III, p 864 fn2.

[42] HQ 1st Bn (AIF), 'Operation Order by 1st Bn', 2 November 1916, AWM 4, item 23/18/13.

[43] 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 4 and 5 November 1916, AWM 4, item 23/18/13.

a bombardment, which the Germans lay immediately in front of their line. The positioning of the German trenches on the reverse slopes had left them relatively untouched by the pre-attack bombardment and although a second attack was organised and launched on the same night it too failed with heavy losses.[44]

The 1st Division learned some hard lessons on the Somme and as the offensive petered out it could pause for breath to analyse the lessons of its first year on the Western Front. Although it would always look back with pride on the achievement of capturing Pozières, the offensive operations of 1916 were costly. Some of the casualties and setbacks could be justly blamed on Gough's handling of the Reserve Army. The British Army at this time was suffering from a gross lack of corporate experience in the management of large-scale operations. The failure to coordinate attacks was a significant issue. Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson in their study of the Somme were only be able to identify a few occasions when British armies coordinated their operations and these occasions appear to have been a coincidence rather than planned. Much of the blame for this situation can fall on Haig's shoulders and his reluctant to interfere in the operations of his subordinates but also much of the problem stemmed from a rapidly expanded army, with senior commanders who had no previous experience in conducting operations on this scale.[45] Likewise the British artillery lacked the material and technical expertise for this type of operation and for all of their hard work they often produced negligible or even negative results.[46] The lack of coordination at corps and army level, when combined with the German superiority in interception, meant that the Germans were often forewarned of

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[44] Lt Col J Heane (CO 1st Bn AIF), 'Report as to minor operation carried out by 1st Bn on Hilt Trench on night of 4/5th Inst', 6 November 1916; and Lt Col J Heane, 'Addendum to Report as to Minor Operation carried out by 1st Bn on Hilt Trench on night of 4/5th Inst', 6 November 1916, AWM 4, item 23/18/13.

[45] For the limitations of senior BEF commanders on the Somme in 1916 see: Prior and Wilson, *Command on the Western Front*, pp 189–190 and 395–396; Prior and Wilson, *The Somme*, pp 304–307; Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front*, pp 23–32; and Simpson, 'British Corps Command on the Western Front, 1914–1918', in Sheffield and Todman (eds), *Command and Control on the Western Front*, pp 103–105.

[46] For the problems and development of the BEF's artillery in 1916 see: Bidwell and Graham, *Fire-Power*, pp 98–99; Prior and Wilson, *Command on the Western Front*, pp 163–176; and Prior and Wilson, *The Somme*, pp 32 and 62–66.

the time and direction of divisional attacks and able to concentrate their fire on the attacking British forces, blunting the assault and increasing casualties. But it was not only the British who had to learn.

Even though the 1st Division had performed well in its debut it too had made mistakes. Some were more obvious (such as the overcrowding of front-line trenches) and these could be remedied over the winter with training, while others were not so clear and would take longer to rectify. In particular poor communications security was still playing a part in pre-warning the Germans of the time and direction of Australian attacks. Staff work too was improving but in some attacks insufficient effort had been made to get fresh troops forward to consolidate captured positions, leaving the exhausted assault troops vulnerable to the inevitable German counterattack. Australian errors had added considerably to the Somme ‘butchers bill’.

On the positive side the Somme was to prove the learning ground for the BEF (albeit a severe and bloody one) and the 1st Division was one of its key beneficiaries. First and foremost, Pozières demonstrated the importance of the individual. Not so much the front-line digger, although his bravery and skill were essential, rather in the choice and teaming of senior commanders and their staff. Once again Walker showed a professionalism and courage that marked him as a commander of rare quality. His refusal to be rushed into a hasty attack by an impetuous superior reflects well upon his character and allowed the divisional staff the time to plan and prepare, stacking the odds in favour of his men. This probably saved the 1st Division from a Fromelles-like disaster.

Valuable battlefield lessons were also learned from the fighting. The BEF’s artillery command and control arrangements were overhauled and techniques were refined, communications were improved, and more versatile infantry tactics developed. The problem for the BEF at this stage was that in the process of its massive expansion the training system had not kept pace with the growth and so there was considerable variation between units and formations depending on the individual abilities of the commander. In late 1916 Gough found that some of his divisions’ units were not even organised for battle:

> *In some units not a single platoon was organized. Sections were broken up, section commanders did not know who were in the sections or that they were expected to command them, platoons did not have their bombers organized as a section under its own commander, bombers were scattered haphazard throughout sections…section organization was entirely neglected and broken up…. platoons were broken up on parade and that the temporary formations formed were not divided into sections and section commanders detailed. Too much was concentrated in the hands of battalion commander, and companies and platoons depleted of all their men and all their experts.*[47]

While the hard won experience of 1916 might initially remain localised, there were some slow and faltering steps towards institutionalising the bitter-won experience, although in a rapidly expanded wartime army this would take time.

The history of new ideas, innovation and the development of doctrine in the BEF has been the subject of a number of studies.[48] Less attention perhaps has been given to how those new ideas actually permeated the army. What is clear is that during 1915 and 1916 no mechanism existed by which such innovations could become widely known. Hence they often remained the preserve of a single division or corps unless a particular staff sought them out. Such was the case in the 1st Division where Walker sent his staff out to learn what it could from its neighbours in July. Nor was this a one-way process. In August, when I ANZAC was withdrawn from the Somme and sent north to relieve the Canadian Corps in the Ypres Sector, Cyril Brudenell White (BGGS I ANZAC) passed a sheaf of documents to his Canadian counterpart addressed to 'my dear Radcliffe' (Brigadier General Percy Pollexfen de Blaquiere Radcliffe).[49] These

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[47] GOC, Fifth Army GA68/0/29 'Precis of Remarks Made by the Army Commander at the Conference held on 27 December 1916', AWM27, item 303/191.

[48] Particularly important studies examining the development of the BEF's doctrine include: Bidwell and Graham, *Fire-Power*, passim; Griffith (ed), *British Fighting Methods in the Great War*, passim; Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Western Front*, passim; and Prior and Wilson, *Command on the Western Front*, passim.

[49] Major General Sir Percy P de B Radcliffe (1874–1934) was a British army regular officer.

documents included 'some useful notes by one of our best brigade commanders…his orders for certain operations…some training orders by the same brigade…[and] a sample of divisional orders, which are the best available, although they go into a great amount of detail.'[50] Appropriate copies of these documents were then passed down to the Canadian divisions. The Canadians reciprocated with copies of all their schemes and maps for the sector I ANZAC was to take over. It was a personalised method of information exchange but over the winter of 1916–17 this unofficial system was largely replaced by a more comprehensive school-based system whereby the BEF's new tactical doctrine could be more widely promulgated.[51] And it is easy to forget just how far the BEF had come in two years. Just how far that journey was, and the part the 1st Division played in its development, would become apparent in the following year.

1917—THE YEAR OF CONSOLIDATION

The year of 1917 was to witness a gradual maturing of the BEF's fighting system. While few new weapons were fielded, techniques and tactics were developed by trial and error or fine-tuned from the experience gained during the previous year. These improvements were most obviously felt in the artillery but they embraced a range of other weapons such as gas, machine-guns, tanks and trench mortars that were more effectively incorporated into the divisional combined-arms team. Assisting these battlefield systems were other developments such as sound ranging, flash spotting, aerial photography and

During the Great War he served as BGGS II Corps (1915–16) and BGGS Canadian Corps (1916–18). After the war he served as Director of Military Operations, War Office (1918–22), GOC 48th Division (1926–27) and GOC Scottish Command (1930–33).

[50] Library and Archives of Canada, Record Group 9IIIC1, Vol 3842, Folder 43, File 9, quoted in Radley, *We Lead Others Follow*, p 90.

[51] Over the winter of 1916–17 the BEF's school system would mature, new doctrine would emerge and at the beginning of 1917 Brigadier General A Solly-Flood was brought to GHQ to establish a Training Directorate. It was not until 1918 however, that these efforts culminated. Bidwell and Graham, *Fire-Power*, p 125–126; Prior and Wilson, *Command on the Western Front*, p 294; and Simmons, *British Generalship on the Western Front 1914–1918*, pp 94–97.

the maturing of the BEF's intelligence services—but the British were not the only ones racing to adapt.[52]

The Germans were stunned by the ferocity of the British offensive on the Somme. Fearing the growing material strength of the allies forced them to change their defensive doctrine.[53] Early in December the German Supreme Army Command published a pamphlet entitled *Conduct of the Defensive Battle* (*die Fuhrung in der Abwehrschlacht*). Written by two young officers on Paul von Hindenburg's staff, this document encapsulated the German defensive lessons of the recent fighting and introduced a more flexible, 'elastic' style of defence.[54] Although popular historians have tended to brand the Somme offensive as a complete failure, the very fact that the Germans felt compelled to modify their doctrine indicates that they were driven by a need to change. The growing strength of BEF, its material superiority and the rapidly improving skill in employing this material compelled their opponents to adapt or perish.

For the British the end of the Somme fighting was also a period of reflection and saw the development of new offensive doctrine. Towards the end of February 1917 the 1st Division was involved in following up the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line and then in March it was pulled out, rested and given three weeks in which to train. The foundation of this training was the new platoon and battalion organisation that had just been promulgated in the pamphlets *Instructions for the Training of Platoons for Offensive Action, 1917* (SS143), *The Organization of an Infantry Battalion and the Normal Formation for the Attack* (SS600), and *Instructions for the Training of Divisions for Offensive Action*

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[52] For recent works on the development of the BEF's war-fighting on the Western Front see: Griffiths, *British Fighting Methods in the Great War*, passim; Griffiths; *Battle Tactics of the Western Front*, passim; Prior and Wilson, *Command on the Western Front,* passim; Gary D Sheffield, *Forgotten Victory: The First World War Myths and Realities*, Headline, London, 2001; Travers, *The Killing Ground*, passim; and Travers, *How the War Was Won*, passim.

[53] For a brief overview of changes to German doctrine see: Lupfer, *The Dynamics of Doctrine*, passim. For a more detailed account of the development and practical application of German defensive doctrine see: Wynne, *If Germany Attacks*, passim; and his early articles upon which this book was published including Captain Graeme C Wynne, 'The Development of the German Defensive Battles in 1917, and Its Influence on British Defence Tactics', Parts 1 and 2, *Army Quarterly*, Vol 34 (April–July 1937) pp 15–32; and Part 3, *Army Quarterly*, Vol 35 (October 1937) pp 14–38.

[54] Wynne, *If Germany Attacks*, p 149.

(SS135). This doctrine guided the 1st Division's training programs for the rest of the war.[55]

As the division returned to the line in early April it relieved the 5th Australian Division. By this time the British line had closed-up on the German defences of the Hindenburg Line. The 1st Division was tasked with clearing a number of villages the Germans were holding as outposts to their main line. In a series of small-scale, sharp actions the 1st Division captured the villages of Hermies, Boursies and Demicourt. These actions demonstrate the further development of British combined-arms tactics as practised by the 1st Division in 1917. Just as the division had lost considerable control over its artillery and engineer assets in late 1916, in the spring of 1917 brigade commanders were forced to delegate some of their assets to their subordinates, providing them with a 'slice' of the brigade's machine-gun company and trench mortars so that the COs could conduct these independent operations. In these actions battalions were usually allocated a Forward Observation Officer to coordinate their artillery support and one or more sections of medium machine-guns. This closer cooperation was universally praised.[56]

Although the German reaction was their attack at Lagnicourt, this was quickly defeated. Then, following its brief involvement in Second Bullecourt, the 1st Division was withdrawn into reserve. I ANZAC was given an extended four-month period of rest and training. All 1st Division units were retrained in a progressive scheme, with training proceeding from platoon and company to battalion, brigade and finally division. Demonstrations were also a frequent feature with the 1st Division's artillery and trench mortars laying down various barrages for regimental officers and soldiers to witness. Aircraft from Number 3 Squadron (Royal Flying Corps) assisted with air-ground contact training. By the end of this period Charles Bean thought that the Australian divisions were

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[55] See chapter 4 for details.

[56] Although small-scale affairs these attacks cost the five battalions involved 649 casualties. Maj Gen HB Walker (GOC), 'Report on the Capture of Hermies, Demicourt and Boursies by First Australian Division, 9th April 1917', AWM4, item 1/42/27 part 1 appendix IV; and 1st Bn (AIF), 'Report on operations of 1st Australian Infantry Battalion on 8th/9th April, 1917', AWM4, item 23/18/18; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol IV, pp 232–251.

probably at their zenith. At the end of July the 1st Division moved north to the rear areas of Belgium Flanders in preparation for its first operation in the Third Battle of Ypres. This move however, did not see an end to training, just a shift in focus. By September as specific tasks became known, the battalions and brigades carried out several reconnaissance of the area over which they were to attack and then conducted dress rehearsal exercises of their tasks, although they did this without their gunners.[57]

At the beginning of the year the 1st Division's artillery was completely overhauled, reducing it to just two field brigades. Even after this reduction the command and control arrangements for the remaining guns was also reviewed and increasingly the 1st Division could expect to lose control of its organic artillery for long periods during major offensives. On 24 June, while the 1st Division remained in reserve, its two artillery brigades were moved back into the line to relieve the 48th Division's artillery. While the rest of the division continued to train and rest throughout July, the gunners were engaged at Bullecourt until relieved on 7 July when they moved to Albert, before moving north to Reninghelst in southern Belgium. Here, in the Ypres Salient, the 1st and 2nd FA Brigades (AIF) were placed under command of 'C' Group—one of the temporary artillery groups formed for Haig's Flanders operations.[58]

Haig's offensive, officially designated as the Third Battle of Ypres (or Third Ypres) and today colloquially known as the Battle of Passchendaele, had grand strategic objectives. Initially Haig aimed to clear the high ground east of Ypres and once this was achieved he intended to swing north to the coast, capturing the Belgium and Dutch ports the Germans were using as U-boat bases. Although Gough had initially been given responsibility for realising Haig's aims, he mismanaged the operations in August, leading to the task being passed to

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[57] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 9 May–16 September 1917, AWM4, items 1/42/28–1/42/32 part 1; Bean, *AOH*, Vol IV, pp 683 and 730–732.

[58] HQ 1st Aust Div Arty, War Diary, 24 June and 7–19 July 1917, AWM4, items 13/10/33–13/10/34; and 1st Div Sig Coy (AIF), War Diary, 24 June and 1–21 July 1917, AWM4, items 22/11/25–22/11/26.

Plumer's Second Army.[59] The first blow in this new phase fell on 20 September in the Battle of the Menin Road.[60]

Menin Road was the first of the 1st Division's operations in the offensive. The division attacked on the morning of 20 September, attacking behind a tremendous rolling barrage. Advancing on a frontage of 1000 metres, the 2nd and 3rd brigades led the way with each brigade arrayed in depth, leap-frogging their battalions as they secured the three objective lines and biting 1500 metres out of the German defences. Held at bay by a standing barrage, the Germans were unable to counterattack. Although there was some stiff German resistance, notably from machine-gun crews housed in concrete pillboxes, it was swiftly dealt with by the infantry advancing in their new battalion formations and employing their new platoon tactics.[61]

So what led to this signature success and how does it compare with Pozières now more than a year in the past? In the first instance it is important to acknowledge that at Menin Road the 1st Division was just one of 11 British and dominion divisions attacking out of the Salient on a frontage of thirteen kilometres; and much had changed throughout the BEF since the disasters on the Somme.[62] These two factors alone make comparisons between 1916 and 1917 tenuous however by examining the similarities and the differences it is possible to chart the development of the 1st Division's offensive operations.

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[59] For the strategic aim, operational objectives and early stages of Third Ypres see: Bean, *AOH*, Vol IV, pp 693–699; and Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson, *Passchendaele: The Untold Story*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1996, pp 31–35 and 197–198.

[60] Passchendaele was only the last of the battles that officially comprised Third Ypres. The other battles in which the 1st Division participated were the Battle of Menin Road (20–25 September 1917), the Battle of Broodseinde (4 October 1917), the Battle of Poelcappelle (9 October 1917), followed by the Battle of Passchendaele (26 October–10 November 1917).

[61] Maj Gen HB Walker (GOC), 'First Australian Division Report on Operations Septr 17th/22nd', nd, AWM4, item 1/42/32 part 2 appendix XXIII; Bean, *AOH*, Vol IV, pp 735–790; and Prior and Wilson, *Passchendaele*, pp 114 and 118.

[62] For the offensive Plumer's army had assigned four corps totalling 14 divisions of which I ANZAC provided four (1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th Australian divisions). For Menin Road Birdwood assigned the tasks to the 1st and 2nd divisions and this was the first occasion two Australian divisions were to attack side-by-side. Bean, *AOH*, Vol IV, p 759.

The fact that the 1st Division, along with the other four divisions of I ANZAC, was chosen for the offensive was in large part due to the continuing stability it enjoyed. In particular its upper command structure remained relatively unchanged since its arrival in France. Walker still headed the division and Blamey was still his GSO1, although he would miss Menin Road because of illness. In his place Walker was able to secure the services of an equally talented British officer, Colonel (later Field Marshal Sir) John Dill[63], while Dill was ably assisted by Lieutenant Colonel (later Lieutenant General Sir) John Lavarack as GSO2.[64] The division was also fortunate in that it entered the battle as part of the same corps it had served with since coming to France and it too retained the same command team of Birdwood and Brudenell White.

Stability gave Walker and his subordinates real opportunities to assess and absorb the lessons of the previous year. Over the winter of 1916–17 this experience was distilled into the new British doctrine but doctrine is not worth the paper it is printed on unless it influences and improves the way an army fights. For the 1st Division, the four months from mid-May to mid-September, were spent on the training grounds practising this doctrine. Overseeing the

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[63] John Dill was an Irish-born, British Army regular who had served in South Africa during the Boer War but on the outbreak of the Great War he was a student at the Staff College, Camberley. His early appointments in the BEF included brigade major, GSO2 with the Canadian Corps, and GSO1 of a British division. In 1917 he was promoted colonel and served briefly as GSO1 1st Division during Menin Road and Broodseinde. He left to serve as GSO1 Operations Branch GHQ before he was promoted to become BGGS GHQ. After the war he served in command and staff appointments, rising to the rank of field marshal and to be appointed Chief of the Imperial General Staff. Alex Danchev, 'Field Marshall Sir John Dill', in John Keegan (ed), *Churchill's Generals*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London, 1991, pp 51–69; Bean, *AOH*, Vol V, p 16 fn31, and Vol VI, p 464 fn3; GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 10 October 1917, AWM4, 1/42/33 Part 1; and Cyril Falls, 'Dill, John Greer', in Hew Strachan, *Military Lives*, pp 100–106.

[64] John 'Joe' Lavarack was an Australian-born, regular officer who was attending Camberley when the war broke-out. Retained in Britain, he was appointed Brigade Major Royal Artillery 22nd Division and after service in France and Salonika he returned to the Western Front where he served as a battery commander and staff officer. In May 1917 he returned to the AIF to be appointed GSO2 1st Division. In the next six months he served under Blamey and it appears that it was during this time that they developed an intense mutual antipathy. Despite this, in late July Lavarack was promoted lieutenant colonel and over the next few months he was acting GSO1 until superseded by Dill. In November Lavarack was posted and for the remainder the war he served as GSO1 of the 3rd and 4th Australian divisions. During World War II served successfully as a division and corps commander before being consigned to obscurity because of his competition with Blamey. NAA: B2455, file LAVARACK JOHN DUDLEY; and David M Horner, 'Lavarack, Sir John Dudley', *ADB*, Vol 15, pp 61–63.

training were Generals William Lesslie, CMG (1st Infantry Brigade AIF)[65], James 'Cast Iron Jimmy' Heane, CMG DSO (2nd Infantry Brigade AIF)[66], and Henry Gordon Bennett, CMG (3rd Infantry Brigade AIF)[67]. They were as good a group of brigade commanders as served in the BEF.

At unit level Walker and his brigadiers were supported by an outstanding group of battle-proven COs. These men, the 'class of 1917', had all been serving in the AIF since the beginning of the war and in three years they rose to command on battlefield ability and leadership performance.[68] Below them were a host of company and platoon commanders, men who for the most part had risen from the ranks and had been trained at either one of the British Officer Training

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[65] William Lesslie was a Canadian-born, British Army regular who had served with Birdwood both in India and on HQ ANZAC on Gallipoli. He was the Chief Engineer II ANZAC when he was appointed to command 1st Infantry Brigade (AIF) in January 1916. He commanded the brigade through until June 1918 when he was replaced as part of the 'Australianisation' of the Australian Corps. Lesslie's successor thought that the Canadian was well accepted by his men 'because he had none of the British stuffiness about him.' I Mackay quoted in Chapman, *Iven G Mackay Citizen and Soldier*, p 84 fn2; Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 124 fn7; GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 28 January and 2 February 1917, AWM4, items 1/42/24 and 1/42/25; GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 5 February 1918 and 6 June 1918, AWM4, items 1/42/37 part 1 and 1/42/41 part 1.

[66] James Heane was an Australian-born, Citizen Forces officer when he joined the AIF in 1914 to be appointed a company commander with the 4th Battalion (AIF). On Gallipoli he temporarily commanded 1st Battalion (AIF) and following the withdrawal he was promoted and his appointment confirmed. He commanded his unit on the Western Front until December 1916 when he was promoted to command of the 2nd Infantry Brigade (AIF). He retained his command until the end of the war and Charles Bean considered him and 'one of the great field successes of the war'. JG Williams, 'Heane, James (1874–1954)', *ADB*, Vol 9, p 248; and NAA: B2455, file HEANE J BRIGADIER-GENERAL.

[67] Henry Gordon Bennett was an Australian-born, Citizen Forces officer before being appointed second-in-command of the 6th Battalion (AIF) in August 1914. On Gallipoli he was promoted to command the battalion, leading it during the unsuccessful attacks on German Officer's Trench. On the Western Front he was promoted to command the 3rd Brigade in December 1916 and retained that command for the remainder of the war. While Bennett earned a considerable reputation as a front-line commander he was also an irascible character that established him as an officer with "a prickly temperament, argumentative nature and proneness to quarrel which promoted his divisional commander, Major General Sir William Glasgow, to label him 'a pest'." Dennis, Grey, Morris, Prior and Connor, *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History*, p 93; AB Lodge, 'Bennett, Henry Gordon (1887–1962)', *ADB*, Vol 13, pp 165–167; and NAA: B2455, file BENNETT HG.

[68] The infantry battalion COs at Menin Road (with decorations at that time) were: Bertie Stacy, DSO (1st Bn AIF); Stanley Milligan, DSO (2nd Bn AIF); Donald Moore, DSO (3rd Bn AIF); Iven Mackay, DSO (4th Bn AIF); Daniel Luxton, DSO (5th Bn AIF); Clarence Daly, DSO (6th Bn AIF); Ernest Herrod (7th Bn AIF); John Mitchell (8th Bn AIF); Leslie Mullen, DSO (9th Bn AIF); Maurice Wilder-Neligan, DSO DCM (10th Bn AIF); Rupert Rafferty, DSO (11th Bn AIF); and Charles Elliott, DSO (12th Bn AIF). All began their service in the AIF as subalterns, except for Wilder-Neligan who had risen from the ranks. GS HQ 1st Aust Div, 'Order of Battle', AWM4, item 1/42/32 part 2 appendix XXIII.

Schools or more commonly they had, after proven front-line service, attended one of the 1st Division's own training schools. It was these men who had to execute the plan as devised by their superiors.[69]

Even more so than at Pozières, the quality of the Menin Road plan and the supporting staff work were well considered and meticulous. The Second Army plan called for a methodical advance in steps with strictly limited objectives and Plumer and his chief of staff Charles 'Tim' Harington were thorough in their preparations even issuing their own *Notes on Training and Preparation for Offensive Operations*, effectively updating the earlier GHQ *Instructions for the Training of Divisions for Offensive Action*.[70] This attention to important detail permeated down to the divisions involved. Hence on the night of 19/20 September as the preliminary bombardment intensified, the 1st Division's two assault brigades moved forward. They did so along especially constructed tracks to their assembly positions. Each brigade followed a separate track that was sign-posted and guides were waiting at any points where it seemed the troops might take the wrong direction. The battalion forming-up areas were all taped out on the ground by their unit Intelligence Officers. To avoid confusion once the attack was launched each soldier had a small colour paint patch on the rear rim of his helmet, denoting the objective line at which he was to hold.[71]

While the 1st Division's staff work at Pozières might be considered above the average for the BEF at that time, the efforts for Menin Road went even further reflecting both the care of the higher HQs and the growing experience of the division's staff. This can be traced through the work that followed after the 7

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[69] Over the winter of 1916–17 and the spring of 1917 a total of 802 1st Division subalterns and NCOs attended training at the 1st Division (later the I ANZAC) School. Most of these men attended a month long infantry course that taught the new platoon tactics. The success of the system of selection and training dominion junior commanders led the British official historian to observe after the war: 'On the whole the leading of the Canadian and Australian officers and NCOs was superior to that of the British regimental cadres, and no doubt for the reason that they had been selected for the practical experience and power over men and not for theoretical proficiency and general education.' Maj RB Smyth (GS HQ 1st Aust Div), 'First Australian Division School. Tirancourt', nd, AWM4, item 1/42/27 part 2 appendix XV; and Edmonds, *BOH: Military Operations, France and Belgium*, 1918 Vol IV, p 515.

[70] Second Army, *Notes on Training and Preparation for Offensive Operations*, 31 August 1917.

[71] Lt Col JG Dill (GSO1 1st Aust Div), 'Instruction No 3 Issued Under Divisional Order No 31', 15 September 1917, AWM4, item 1/42/32 part 1 appendix I.

September conference at which the division's senior commanders and staff were briefed on their role in the forthcoming attack. A reconnaissance of the forward areas was conducted the next day and on 9 September Divisional Order No 31 was issued.[72] The next day divisional HQ opened near Reninghelst and Divisional Order No 32 provided the march orders for the assembly of the division southwest of Ypres.[73] At the same time Plumer was watching a dress rehearsal of the 3rd Infantry Brigade (AIF) at Vieux Berquin. The next day it was the turn of the 2nd Brigade to be scrutinised by Plumer, while the HQ prepared for its final move to Scottish Lines. On 13 September as the HQ completed its move, the troops began their two-day approach march to the Salient.[74]

On 15 September a further reconnaissance was made of the front-line and work began on communications, supply dumps and dugouts for the division's use. In addition officers and NCOs of the assault units were briefed on a large-scale ground model.[75] On the following night the 1st Brigade relieved part of the 47th (London) Division on the edge of Glencorse Wood. As part of this relief the 1st Battalion went into the line on the afternoon of 16 September, relieving the 7th London Regiment. The battalion held this position until the night of 17/18 September when it was relieved by the assault troops, except for the advanced posts, which the 1st Battalion continued to hold. These posts shielded the assembling troops and the following day (19 September) they were able to silence a German machine-gun and flamethrower, allowing the assault troops to

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[72] The order was issued on Walker's authority although typically Blamey signed it as GSO1. Col TA Blamey (GSO1), 'First Australian Divisional Order No 31', 9 September 1917, AWM4, item 1/42/32 part 1 appendix I.

[73] Lt Col JD Lavarack (Acting GSO1), 'First Australian Divisional Order No 32', 11 September 1917, AWM4, item 1/42/32 part 1 appendix III.

[74] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 7–13 September 1917, AWM4, item 1/42/32 part 1; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol IV, pp 749–750.

[75] William Peach, along with the other unit officers and NCOs were briefed on this model on the afternoon of 15 September. Cpl W Peach, diary entry, 15 September 1917, papers of the 7th Bn (AIF) Association, AWM: PR 87/215, Box 2, folder 16 of 29.

assemble without interference. These posts were held until one hour before Zero.[76]

In the meantime for a week beginning 11 September, Walker's HQ produced a steady stream of instructions expanding upon its original orders. Instruction Number 1 dealt with the establishment of a divisional reinforcement camp; Number 2 with supplementary instructions on the barrage, machine-guns and forward routes; Number 3 provided further information on the forward assembly areas, strongpoint construction on the objectives, dress and equipment of the assault troops, the distinguishing helmet patches, the divisional reserve, maintaining direction in the attack, forming-up, and the passage of information; Number 4 covered the gathering of information during the attack and the handling of prisoners; Number 5 with liaison between HQ and the brigades; Number 6 with the tasks of the engineers and pioneers; Number 7 with communications; Number 8 medical arrangements; Number 9 the supporting machine-guns; Number 10 artillery and cooperation between the infantry and their supporting gunners; Number 11 policing arrangements; while the last four instructions (Numbers 12, 13, 14 and 15) focussed primarily on various aspects of command, control and communications and some last minute miscellaneous matters. Preparations were most thorough but again this took time.[77]

From the first warning order to the launch of its attack the 1st Division had nearly two weeks' battle procedure. Warning of the attack and the tasks were issued at a divisional conference at 3.00 pm on 7 September, with 1st Division's preliminary orders following two days later at 7.30 pm on 9 September. The numerous divisional supplementary instructions followed between 11 and 18 September and also on 18 September I ANZAC issued its formal orders for the

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[76] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 15–17 September 1917, AWM4, item 1/42/32 part 1; 1st Div Sig Coy (AIF), War Diary, 16–17 September 1917, AWM4, item 22/11/28; and 1st Bn (AIF), War Diary, 16–19 September 1917, AWM4, item, 23/18/23.

[77] Instruction Number 1 was signed by Blamey, Numbers 2, 5–11 and 13–15 by Lavarack, while remainder were promulgated under Dill's signature. GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, September 1917, AWM4, item 1/42/32 part 1, appendix I.

operation stipulating the divisional objective, tasks and details of the fire plan.[78] On the following day the preliminary bombardment began, with Zero hour set for 5.40 am on 20 September. From first warning to execution, this preparatory period amounted to more than twice as long as the time available at Pozières.[79] On the other hand, historian John Lee considers the staff work of 1st Division for this task to be unremarkable and similar in quality to the other British and dominion divisions involved in the attack. If his analysis is correct this indicates that the developments that marked the 1st Division's growing professionalism were also present in at least those divisions selected to participate in Plumer's operations.[80]

Perhaps the crucial factor that highlighted the advances made by the BEF since mid-1916, and one linked closely to the quality of the staff work, was the strength and complexity of the artillery support. To deal with the new German 'zone' defences, the 'rolling' or 'creeping' barrage, first trialled on the Somme in the previous year, had by now been perfected. No longer was the barrage just a single line of shells moving forward at the pace of the infantry. At Menin Road the rolling barrage consisted of five successive lines of fire extending 900 metres deep. The first line was fired by the 18-pounders, the second by a combination of 18-pounders and 4.5-inch howitzers, and the furthest three by Vickers machine-guns and the heavy guns of the corps and army artillery. From the beginning of the assault through to the anticipated defeat of any German counterattacks the I ANZAC barrage fired continuously for eight hours and eight minutes. As one gunner noted in his diary:

> *Stunt started at 5.40 a.m. and we kept firing till about 1.15 p.m. Our infantry gained all their objectives…and the prisoners have been coming down. S.O.S. about 2.30 p.m. but Fritz knocked back.*

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[78] GS HQ I ANZAC, War Diary, September 1917, appendix A, Capt RH Osborne (for BGGS), 'First ANZAC Corps Order No 172', 18 September 1917, AWM4, 1/29/20 part 2.

[79] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 7–20 September 1917, AWM4, item 1/42/32 part 1.

[80] John Lee, 'Command and Control in Battle: British Divisions on the Menin Road Ridge, 20 September 1917', in Sheffield and Todman, *Command and Control on the Western Front*, pp 130–134.

> *Another…about 5. p.m. and again at 6.30 p.m. Fritz knocked back each time.*[81]

Surprisingly, none of the guns supporting the 1st Division belonged to her. The five brigades supporting its front were the 3rd, 6th and 12th Army FA brigades and the 7th and 8th FA brigades of the 3rd Australian Division.[82] By this time a level of standardisation and degree of sophistication had been achieved throughout the BEF's artillery, which meant the infantry could generally rely on any gunners commanded by a competent CO. In any case all of the improvised groups supporting the 1st Division were under the able control of division's artillery commander, Brigadier General Walter Coxen. In a complex technical environment 'Wacky' Coxen performed with great efficiency and he was undoubtedly one of the key factors in the division's performance in 1917.[83] He and his gunners gave the infantry their best chance of success but the infantry were not expecting the guns to simply shepherd them to their objectives.

The 'new model' 1st Division infantry had been trained to a high level on the training grounds of Vieux Berquin during the summer months leading up to the offensive. This training focussed on the new attack doctrine of the BEF, from divisional level down to platoon. Under this doctrine, attacks were launched in waves, with each wave generally consisting of two lines of troops, and the formations being tailored. Depending on the size, frontage and depth of the attack, each wave might be made up of a single platoon or in larger attacks the

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[81] Gnr RF Hall (4th FA Bde AIF), diary entry, 20 September 1917, quoted in Gammage, *The Broken Years*, p 188.

[82] GS HQ I ANZAC, 'Army Barrage Map—First Phase—September 1917', AWM4, 1/29/20 part 5 appendix G, map 13; GS HQ 1st Aust Div, 'Div Order No 31', 9 September 1917, AWM4, item 1/42/32 part 1; Maj AM Forbes (BMRA), First Australian Divisional Artillery Group Orders No 1 and 4, 8 and 10 September 1917, AWM4, item 13/10/36 appendices B and F; and Bean, *AOH,* Vol IV, p 744 fn29.

[83] Coxen was a British-born, Australian regular who in May 1915 was appointed to command the 36th Heavy Artillery Group (AIF). He served in France with the BEF until the AIF's infantry reached the Western Front and in January 1917 he was appointed CRA 1st Division. In October 1917 he was promoted to GOCRA Australian Corps. He was known alternatively as 'Boss Gunner' or 'Wacky' (a derivative of his initials WAC) and was known for his keen insight and tremendous memory. NAA: B2455, file COXEN WA; and Warren Perry, 'Coxen, Walter Adam (1870–1949)', *ADB*, Vol 8, pp 131–132.

platoon might be divided between the two lines of a single wave.[84] Either way, it was the platoon that was regarded 'as the unit in the assault.'[85]

Battalion formations were also adapted depending on the number of objectives. In general each wave was to take a single objective and so the determination of the number of waves depended on the number of objectives. Each wave was also to be followed by dedicated 'moppers-up' to ensure that the position was cleared while the assaulting troops consolidated the position in preparation for the inevitable German counterattack. Usually a battalion would not be given more than two objectives, in which case it was recommended that the leading wave go straight to the furthest objective allowing the second wave to halt and deal with the near objective. In cases where there were multiple objectives, such as at Menin Road, it was recommended that the lead wave seize the nearer objective and then the succeeding waves would pass through 'leap-frogging' them to the next objective. Nor did the infantry have to rely solely upon their new platoons and Lewis guns.[86]

One of the most innovative features of the Battle of the Menin Road was the use of the medium machine-guns. As the division arrived in the Ypres sector its brigade machine-gun companies were detached and grouped at a Corps Machine-gun Camp near Belgian Chateau. As with the artillery, these arrangements were maintained during the succeeding operations and corps HQ issued a series of orders detailing the tasks of the machine-guns in the forthcoming attack.[87] These tasks were allocated by the Corps Machine-gun Officer who designated the companies as either 'mobile' or 'attacking' and then placing them at the disposal of the divisional commanders. By allotment 96

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[84] GS GHQ BEF, *The Organization of an Infantry Battalion and the Normal Formation for the Attack*, pp 8 and 10, plates A and B.

[85] GS, *The Organization of an Infantry Battalion and the Normal Formation for the Attack*, p 4.

[86] GS GHQ BEF, *The Organization of an Infantry Battalion and the Normal Formation for the Attack*, p 5.

[87] These tasks included harassing fire prior to the attack; mobile guns for the consolidation of the ground won; the indirect creeping barrage; a SOS line barrage 400 yards in front of the final objective; fire on special targets; and reserves. WA Carne *In Good Company: An Account of the 6th Machine Gun Company AIF in search of Peace 1915–19*, 6th Machine Gun Company (AIF) Association, Melbourne, 1937, p 212.

guns were tasked with indirect fire for attack and defence along the corps front. On the final objective the infantry had a potential allocation of one gun per 25 yards of frontage. This was in addition to the direct fire of the front-line guns attached to the assaulting brigades. For the 1st Division its 64 guns were distributed across the attack front; with 24 guns allotted to the SOS barrage, eight guns to special targets, while the other 32 guns were given back to the brigades for employment as mobile guns to provide direct fire support of the attack. During the operation these guns fired 667,000 rounds.[88]

The combination of these measures meant that at Menin Road the 1st Division's infantry was unstoppable. Advancing in well-armed groups, with Lewis guns and rifle grenades, they were able to deal with any German opposition that escaped the barrage. Closely supported by their medium machine-guns and trench mortars, they advanced across no-man's-land sheltered by a creeping barrage that advanced at 100 yards every four minutes and protected them as they consolidated and dug-in on their objectives. While the 1st Division still suffered more than 2700 casualties, the diggers were left elated with their success, while 'the German troops came out of the battle crushed'.[89]

Six days later Second Army struck another hammer blow at Polygon Wood. The 1st Division returned to the line on 4 October for the third attack at Broodseinde. Space precludes a detailed assessment of this important battle, needless to say it bore Plumer's same bite-and-hold hallmarks as Menin Road. Although this new effort cost the division another 2400 casualties, it was another shattering blow for the Germans. So successful were these step-by-step, limited objective attacks that the German Army labelled 4 October a 'Black Day'. Unfortunately

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[88] Capt RH Osborne (for BGGS I ANZAC), 'Machine Gun instructions No 1', 9 September 1917, AWM4, 1/29/20 part 6; GS HQ 1st Aust Div, 'Report on Operations carried out by 64 Machine guns in right sector of I ANZAC Corps front during advance on & forward of GLENCORSE WOOD THONNE BOSCHEN on 20 Sept 1917', AWM4, item 1/42/32 part 2 appendix XXIV; Carne, *In Good Company*, pp 212–213; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol IV, p 746 fn29.

[89] Bean, *AOH*, Vol IV, p 789. For a detailed description of the 1st Division's role in the Menin Road battle see: GS HQ 1st Aust Div, 'First Australian Division Report on Operations Septr 17th/22nd', AWM4, item 1/42/32 part 2 appendix XXIII; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol IV, pp 735–790.

fate intervened and on the night of the third victory rain began to fall across Flanders, swamping the flat ground and liquefying the porous soil.[90]

The 1st Division's final involvement in Third Ypres was a minor task in support of the dying offensive. On 6 November a last effort was made to secure the high ground and the village of Passchendaele. On this day the Canadian Corps was on the right and I ANZAC on its left. Fortunately for the 1st Division its involvement was restricted to simulating an attack on the Droogenbrood-hoek Spur by the use of artillery and machine-gun fire. In accordance with the plan the 1st Division undertook to prolong the Canadian machine-gun barrage southwards and to direct neutralising fire against the Germans on the Eddy Heights. The 1st Division allocated 21 guns to this task and the 2nd Division provided assistance in the form of another eight guns, which were placed under command of the 3rd Machine-gun Company. These guns then fired for two hours from Zero (6.00 am) at a prescribed rate of 4000 rounds per gun per hour.[91]

In late October Harold Walker wrote to James McCay (GOC AIF Depots in Britain) about the necessity of reorganising the divisional training groups, as he noted that the division had 'been having some pretty strenuous times lately!'[92] He was of course referring to the division's role in the Third Ypres, as since July 38,000 Australian soldiers, almost 60 percent of the AIF in France, had become casualties. During the year the 1st Division suffered a total of 9082 battle casualties, with 90 per cent of those falling in the four major engagements of Lagnicourt, Bullecourt, Menin Road and Broodseinde. About 65 per cent of those casualties fell on the division's infantry brigades. Although the division still

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[90] Orders and Instructions for the Broodseinde attack were similar to those issued for Menin Road. GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, September and October 1917, AWM4, items 1/42/32 part 1 and 1/42/33 part 1. For a description of the 1st Division's role in the battle and its casualties see: Maj Gen HB Walker (GOC), 'First Australian Division. Report on Operations October 4/5th 1917', nd, AWM4, item 1/42/33 part 2 appendix XXXV; Bean, *AOH*, Vol IV, p 876; and Prior and Wilson, *Passchendaele*, pp 135–136. For an account of this battle from the New Zealand Division's perspective see: Harper, *Dark Journey*, pp 38–59.

[91] Carne, *In Good Company*, pp 258–260.

[92] Maj Gen HB Walker (GOC), HQ 1st Aust Div letter 128/66 to Brig Gen JW McCay (GOC AIF Depots), 29 October 1917, AWM27, item 303/1.

had an Establishment of 18,000, the AIF's recruiting crisis ensured that it was rarely at full strength. Between the end of August and the end of October the division's strength declined from more than 19,000 to 14,500.[93] The number of troops available would only continue to fall in the final year of the war and the division would have to rely ever more heavily on the strength of its administrative system to return those dwindling veterans to refill its ranks; and on the quality of their training to provide a qualitative edge as its numerical strength waned. While John Terrain noted that from the time of Third Ypres the Australian and New Zealand divisions became 'the spearhead of the British Army', in the case of the 1st Division its edge was becoming fragile.[94]

1918—THE YEAR OF VICTORY

In March 1918 the Germans struck the allies hard attempting to drive a wedge between the British and French and win the war before the arrival of the newly formed American armies could tip the balance irreversibly against them. Along the Somme their 'Michael' offensive drove a deep fissure in the British line aimed at the great transport hub of Amiens. Rushed south from the Messines sector, where Monash's Australian Corps had spent the winter, the Australians immediately helped stem the faltering offensive. Barely had they arrived however, when the new 'George' offensive erupted to the north threatening the equally vital hub of Hazebrouck.

As the 1st Division rushed back on its own, it was pushed into the line, first as the Second Army reserve and later to join the XV Corps. Holding an extended sector from April to July the 1st Division was able to engage in the type of low-level tactics at which the Australian soldier had come to excel. Their form of aggressive infantry minor tactics, colloquially known as 'peaceful penetration', involved minor patrols, raids and small unit offensive actions usually initiated by

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[93] Divisional strength on 31 August 1917 was 19,133 all ranks (less attachments) while on 31 October 1917 it was 14,562 all ranks (less attachments). GS HQ 1st Aust Div, 'First Australian Division. Daily Strength at noon August 31st 1917', AWM4 item 1/42/31 appendix 9; and GS HQ 1st Aust Div, 'First Australian Division. Daily Strength as at noon 30/10/17', AWM4, item 1/42/33 part 2 appendix 38.

[94] John Terraine, *The First World War*, Leo Cooper, London, 1983, p 151.

regimental commanders. The skill with which these operations were conducted and the devastating effect they had on the German formations facing them demonstrate just how far the division had come in four years. No longer a raw conglomeration of units, by 1918 with much hard experience, tough training and backed by a comprehensive administrative system, the division was now a highly professional combined-arms team.

An action at Merris in late July by a single battalion of the 3rd Infantry Brigade (AIF) gives some indication of just how sophisticated the 1st Division's offensive operations could be. The aim was seize a local height and village captured by the Germans in their last push back in April. The rise, Mont de Merris, provided visibility over the nearby village of Merris. A preliminary operation had seized the forward slopes of the hill only to find that a second hill, not discernable on any of the issue maps, still hid the village from view. To capture the village a further operation was authorised, with Maurice Wilder-Neligan's 10th Battalion (AIF) being given the lead. Wilder-Neligan developed his plan in consultation with the CO of the 1st FA Brigade (AIF), Jeremiah Selmes[95], after which Glasgow refined the outline and gave his approval although stipulating that only a single battalion was to be employed. The plan, which incorporated four brigades of field artillery, was deceptively simple in concept, highly complex in the execution.

Zero was 12.30 am on 28 July. As the artillery lay down a hail of fire, Wilder-Neligan employed just two of his companies to sweep around the town on arching but converging axis. As the companies advanced they established a series of posts effectively cutting-off the village from the rest of the German line. Only when the village was isolated did the earmarked troops begin to mop-up the remaining German defenders, attacking them from their rear. The attack

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[95] Selmes was a Boer War veteran and Citizen Forces officer in 1914 when he was appointed a second lieutenant with the 2nd Battery (AIF). He saw service on Gallipoli and following the withdrawal he was promoted captain and transferred to the 4th Australian Division artillery. In France he rejoined the 1st FA Brigade (AIF) and in 1917 he was promoted major, serving with the 1st DAC (AIF) and temporarily commanding the 1st FA Brigade while Edwin Dean was acting CRA. Four of Selmes's sons also served with the 1st Division artillery. NAA: B2455, file SELMES JEREMIAH CHARLES; and Dean, *War Service Record of the First Australian Field Artillery Brigade, 1914–1919*, pp 46–47 and 212.

was a complete success capturing four officers, 179 soldiers and 20 machine-guns for the loss of one Australian killed and 35 wounded.[96] This bold and imaginative attack at night would have seemed impossible even a year before, leading the recently appointed British Inspector General of Training to describe it as the 'best show ever done by a battalion in France'.[97] It was only a taste of what awaited the Germans.

When the crisis abated at Hazebrouck the 1st Division was recalled and reunited with the other four Australian divisions just in time to take part in the final 100 days' campaign. This campaign was initially planned to just drive the Germans clear of Amiens; unexpectedly it developed into a more significant and continuous offensive that only ended with the defeat of the German Army in the west. Throughout August and September the 1st Division drove deep into the German front, winning further laurels at Lihons, Chuignes, and finishing the war poised on the Hindenburg Line when the Armistice ceased the fighting.

On 29 July General Rawlinson (GOC Fourth Army) was advised that in anticipation of an attack in conjunction with the First French Army, he was to be secretly reinforced with the Canadian Corps, the Cavalry Corps and the 1st Australian Division. The 1st Division returned to the Somme too late to take a leading role in this great Battle of Amiens. Instead it was placed in corps reserve and warned that it might be used to exploit success or to reinforce the lead divisions, while at the same time its 1st Infantry Brigade and divisional artillery were detached.[98]

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[96] The attack was supported by the equivalent of four brigades of guns, with 72 18-pounders providing the rolling barrage, the 4.5-inch howitzers covering the flanks of the attack, and other concentrations falling on Merris, and the heavy guns providing concentrations of fire on known German strong points and machine-gun posts. Providing this support were the 1st FA Brigade, 12th (Army) Brigade, 64th (Army) Brigade and the 179th (Army) Brigade. 'The Operation of the 1st Australian Division at Merris—29th July, 1918', pp 2–3, AWM: Blamey papers, 3DRL/6643, Box 67, file 5/30.

[97] Maj Gen I Maxse quoted in Alex J Hill, 'Wilder-Neligan, Maurice', entry in *ADB*, Vol 12, p 484.

[98] GHQ, Personal and Very Secret Memorandum 'OAD 900/3', 29 July 1918, IWM: Dawnay papers, 69/21/4, bound volume titled 'Operations Western Front 1918–19'; and GS HQ 1st Aust Div, '…extracts from Australian Corps Orders and Battle Instructions…', 7 August 1918, AWM4, item 1/42/43 part 2 appendix 4.

The allies' carefully orchestrated Amiens blow fell on 8 August and saw the Germans facing another 'Der Schwarze Tag'—a Black Day. On the following day the 1st Division was called forward to follow-up the success by driving east toward the town of Lihons. The Battle of Lihons was fought between 9 and 11 August and involved a continuation of the 8 August attack with the Canadian Corps on the right to the south, the Australian Corps in the centre and south of the Somme, and the British III Corps to the left on the northern side of the Somme. For the Australian Corps the 1st, 2nd and 5th Australian divisions were to support the Canadian Corps advance towards Chaulnes, while Monash pushed forward the right of his line about Harbonnieres and seized Lihons. This involved making an advance of about seven kilometres to capture Lihons hill lying just west of the village, and a prominent summit that was being used by German batteries.[99]

The 5th Division held the Australian front in this sector. Monash however, decided to bring up the 1st Division and slide it alongside the 5th Division since any further advance by the corps was constantly expanding its front. The 5th Division's role was therefore confined to securing what would become the 1st Division's left flank with the 8th Brigade capturing the village of Vauvillers, before itself being relieved by the 2nd Division.[100]

The problem with the plan was that the 1st Division had only just arrived from the north the previous day and by the time Monash realised that the 1st Division was in no position to move forward with the Canadian left, the plan was already in motion. Hence when the Canadians began their advance at 11.00 am on 9 August, the 5th Division's 15th Brigade was forced to step in and take up the advance at short notice. This proved a tough task and 'Pompey' Elliott's brigade was quickly pinned down by German machine-gun fire and on the left flank an equally difficult fight broke out in front of Vauvillers involving the 8th Brigade.

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[99] Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, pp 614 and 618–619.

[100] Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, pp 618–619; and Pedersen, *Monash as a Military Commander*, p 251.

Fortunately by the time troops of the 1st Division came up and began to pass through the 5th Division at 1.45 pm, Vauvillers had been taken.[101]

The 1st Division's advance towards Lihons was now pressed by 'Cast Iron Jimmy' Heane's 2nd Infantry Brigade (AIF), supported by the 14 tanks of the 2nd Tank Battalion. Henry Gordon Bennett's 3rd Brigade followed behind in depth, while the on-loan 6th Infantry Brigade (AIF) remained in divisional reserve. Though bombed by German aircraft and shelled by guns on Lihons hill, progress was helped by the fact that the 6th Canadian Brigade on the right had got far ahead and was thus effectively outflanking the German defences. Although the guns on the hill did dreadful execution to the tanks supporting the advance, soon putting all of these out of action, by midafternoon the attack was only about one kilometre short of its objective. By about 5.00 pm elements of the brigade had seized part of the crest and were holding on.[102]

The operation resumed at 8.00 am on 10 August, with the 2nd and 3rd brigades moving directly against Lihons hill.[103] A battalion of the 7th Infantry Brigade (2nd Australian Division) supported the 1st Division's attack, keeping up the left flank. By the time the Canadians again went forward, the Australians were locked in a bitter struggle for the crest. German resistance continued for the rest of the day and Monash ordered the fight to resume at 4.00 am on 11 August.[104]

On the next day the 2nd and 3rd brigades again pressed forward. This attack, conducted under the cloak of heavy fog, carried the back slopes of Lihons hill and the village beyond. Severe fighting again followed as the Germans countered, first with gas and then with infantry counterattacks. These failed to

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[101] Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, pp 621–624, 626–627 and 629.

[102] Lt Col AM Ross (GSO1), 'Report on Operations Carried Out By First Aust. Division on the 9th, 10th and 11th August 1918, Culminating in the Capture of Lihons', nd, AWM4, 1/42/43 part 3 appendix 10; Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, pp 630–636, 638–640 and 643–644; and Pedersen, *Monash as a Military Commander*, p 251.

[103] On the night of 9 August the divisional artillery was returned to the 1st Division and on the following day the 1st Infantry Brigade also rejoined the division. GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 9–10 August 1918, AWM4, item 1/42/43 part 1; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, pp 653–654.

[104] Lt Col AM Ross (GSO1), 'Report on Operations Carried Out By First Aust. Division on the 9th, 10th and 11th August 1918, Culminating in the Capture of Lihons', nd, AWM4, 1/42/43 part 3 appendix 10; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, pp 653–654.

expel the Australians and by the night the attack in this sector effectively ended with all objectives secure. The three days leading up to this point had been costly, with the 1st Division's two engaged brigades suffering nearly 1600 casualties.[105] In the balance however, the division captured 212 prisoners, 24 artillery pieces, 40 trench mortars and 177 machine-guns.[106] The heavy Australian casualties and the low number of prisoners indicate that the Germans at this stage of the campaign were far from beaten and Monash considered the Lihons battle 'a great feat' and listed it as one of the 1st Division's best performances of the war.[107]

So how does this performance compare with Menin Road and Brooseinde 11 months earlier or even Pozières a distant two years? In the first instance the circumstances of the operations in August 1918 were completely different from 1916 and 1917. While the earlier operations can be classified as 'limited objective' attacks, the German offensives of March and April had radically altered conditions on the Western Front, opening-up operations and offering the opportunity to return to more mobile and continuous operations rarely seen since 1914. Hence, Lihons was not so much a set-piece attack, it was more like an advance-in-contact exploiting the successful set-piece attack of 8 August. German resistance did not crumble and it actually strengthened as the advance continued, and this type of operation posed new and radically different challenges for the 1st Division, demanding a tempo not experienced before.

Monash warned his divisional commanders at noon on 8 August that any advance the next day would probably be on the southern flank. Glasgow had however, just established his HQ at Villers-Bretonneux and two of his brigades

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[105] Lt Col AM Ross (GSO1), 'Report on Operations Carried Out By First Aust. Division on the 9th, 10th and 11th August 1918, Culminating in the Capture of Lihons', nd, AWM4, 1/42/43 part 3 appendix 10; Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, pp 617–620, 626–644, 649–678, 682–683 and 684 fn36; and Maj Gen Sir Archibald Montgomery, *The Story of the Fourth Army in the Battles of the Hundred Days August 8th to November 11th 1918*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, nd, pp 60–63.

[106] The prisoners included six officers and 206 unwounded soldiers and the artillery taken included two 21 cm guns, 12 10 cm howitzers, three 7.5 cm anti-tank guns and seven 7.7 cm field guns. Lt Col AM Ross (GSO1), 'Report on Operations Carried Out By First Aust. Division on the 9th, 10th and 11th August 1918, Culminating in the Capture of Lihons', nd, AWM4, 1/42/43 part 3 appendix 10.

[107] Monash, *Australian Victories*, p 153.

had not yet arrived, while the third was detached. When orders to the 1st Division to move forward for the next days' operation were issued at midnight (for an attack originally designated to start at 10.00 am) the 2nd and 3rd brigades had only just arrived in their bivouac areas and were between two and five kilometres away from Glasgow's HQ. Heane only received his warning order at 3.40 am and by the time he and Bennett were hurried by car to divisional HQ for orders, it was already 8.00 am. Fortunately the brigadiers had their men move independently and by 8.45 am the 2nd Brigade's battalions had begun their 16 kilometre approach march. In short, despite his best efforts Glasgow had been given an impossible task with just ten hours to advise his scattered brigades, draft a plan, prepare and issue orders, get his troops moving towards their start line, establish liaison with the neighbouring 2nd Canadian Division, hook-up with the supporting tanks and launch a divisional attack. He was expected to do most of this at night without established communications.[108]

Following its near miraculous efforts on the night of 8 August, the 1st Division then fought almost continuously for three days. Although delayed at beginning the operation, by the afternoon the 2nd Brigade was pushing forward against stiff German resistance, eventually securing the objective line set it. At midnight on 9 August orders for a resumption of the advance the next morning were issued. At 8.00 am the advance began against heavy machine-gun fire but by evening all objectives were secure and the inevitable German counterattack defeated. At 9.30 pm orders were issued for the resumption of the advance at 4.00 am the following day but a breakdown in communications due to enemy fire meant that the 3rd Brigade did not receive its orders until after midnight. Despite this, the brigades stepped off promptly at 4.00 am with the 2nd and 3rd brigades again side by side, although absent the promised tank support. Lihons village was secured in the face of fierce counterattacks and that night the 2nd Brigade was relieved by the 1st Brigade. During the afternoon Haig, Rawlinson, Monash and the Australian divisional commanders met at the 1st Division's HQ

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[108] The 2nd Brigade had only arrived around Aubigny shortly before dusk on 8 August, while the 3rd Brigade did not get to its bivouacs around Hamel until midnight. GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 8–9 August 1918, AWM4, item 1/42/43 part 1; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, pp 618 and 620.

to discuss the next phase of operations. As a result 12 August was generally a quiet day, with a visit by the King and a further conference involving the Australian and Canadian corps commanders to discuss the details of the next phase. During this pause the division received warning of its impending relief and so over the next few days divisional HQ issued orders for the relief and instructions for training, including tank familiarisation, once the division moved back to Corbie. At 10.00 am on 16 August the 1st Division handed over the line to the 4th Australian Division.[109]

For the 1st Division Lihons was a significant achievement. It had sustained a divisional advance over three days in an operation unlike anything in its previous experience. It did this with very little time to prepare and most operations were launched on single page of 'Battle Instructions' rather than the multi-page orders and supplementary directives of a year earlier.[110] Casualties were heavy and it was a case of diminishing returns the longer the offensive was sustained but the Germans suffered more and were driven inexorably rearward. This achievement dwarfs the set-piece affairs of Pozières and Third Ypres although it relied even more heavily on the experience and initiative of the division's commanders and staff.[111]

While the old team of Walker and Blamey were now gone, in their place the 1st Division had a strong cast that proved capable of leading it through the novel conditions. Glasgow performed well despite the fact that this was his first significant test as a divisional commander. In addition, he had the added challenge of dealing with many new staff since the departure of Walker had also coincided with a significant changeover of the division's senior staff. In mid-May Blamey left the 1st Division to become BGGS Australian Corps and the position of GSO1 fell vacant. George Wieck temporarily filled-in until mid-July, just before the division moved south to rejoin the Australian Corps, when Lieutenant

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[109] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 8–16 August 1918, AWM4, item 1/42/43 part 1; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, pp 653–654.

[110] Orders for these operations beginning on 9 August were issued as a series of one page 'Battle Instructions'. Lt Col AM Ross (GSO1 1st Aust Div), 'Battle Instructions Nos 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7', 9–13 August 1918, AWM4, item 1/42/43 part 2 appendix 4.

[111] Prior and Wilson, *Command on the Western Front*, pp 329–331.

Colonel Arthur Ross replaced him. Ross proved to be an ideal GSO1 and although a British regular he had served with the AIF since 1914. While he had not attended the pre-war staff college, by 1918 he was an experienced, versatile officer having served in a variety of staff, command and training appointments. He was antithesis of the popular image of the callous, incompetent staff officer and he made a worthy chief of staff for Glasgow.[112]

Aside from the staff, we have already glimpsed the calibre of men leading the infantry brigades—Mackay, Hearne and Bennett. Glasgow also had a talented and experienced CRA commanding the division's artillery. When 'Wacky' Coxen left the division to become 'Boss gunner' of the Australian Corps, the 1st Division's CRA position was filled by the capable Brigadier General Stuart Anderson. Like Ross, Anderson was a British regular who had served with the AIF since 1914 and had a strong background in command, staff and training. This was just as well since the artillery operations in the final campaigns were technically and practically different from earlier experience, demanding flexibility not needed before.[113] Anderson soon found himself managing not just his own two field brigades, in the new devolved operations he was directing the efforts of two attached army field artillery brigades.[114]

On the other hand unlike Pozières and Menin Road, the artillery was not as decisive a factor during the Battle of Lihons, at least as far as the 1st Division

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[112] Arthur Ross was a British Army regular and Boer War veteran. In January 1914 he was seconded to Australia as the tactics instructor at RMC-A. In August he was appointed Staff Captain 3rd Infantry Brigade (AIF). During his service on Gallipoli he was appointed brigade major and following the withdrawal he was promoted and appointed CO 51st Battalion (AIF). He served as CO on the Western Front for a year until April 1917 when took command of the I ANZAC School. In mid-1918 he returned to the 1st Division as GSO1, holding that appointment until demobilisation. Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 51 fn14; GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 11–12 July 1918, AWM4, 1/42/42 part 1; and NAA: B2455, file ROSS ARTHUR MURRAY.

[113] Anderson was a pre-war British regular on loan to Australia when he was appointed Brigade Major Royal Artillery 1st Division in August 1914. Following the Gallipoli campaign he was promoted and appointed CO 1st FA Brigade (AIF) and he later commanded the I ANZAC Artillery School. In late 1917 he was again promoted and replaced Coxen. AWM43, file A23; AIF, *Staff Regimental and Graduation List of Officers*, 22 September 1914, pp 3, 7 and 43; Bean, *AOH*, Vol II, p 66 and Vol VI pp 898 fn52 and 957 fn29; and NAA: B2455, file ANDERSON SM.

[114] Lt Col AM Ross (GSO1 1st Aust Div), 'Battle Instructions No 2', 9 August 1918, AWM4, item 1/42/43 part 2 appendix 4.

was concerned. On the first day of advance the division was forced to do without a barrage because of the confusion and delay in moving forward to its start line. On 9 August it relied on a handful of tanks, although these were quickly knocked out, and the barrage fired in support fell too far ahead of the attacking troops and their only cover was a fortuitous early morning mist. Only on 11 August did the troops have the benefit of a steady, accurate barrage, some supporting tanks (although they arrived late) and once again a ground mist helped to mask their movement forward. So, for the most part the infantry had to rely upon their own devices and initiative, rather than massed barrages or tanks.[115]

The division's infantry however, were a fast evaporating resource. Although the Australian Corps chose to maintain its four-battalion brigade structure in 1918, this decision was not without impact. Within the 1st Division the retention of four-battalion brigades came at the expense of the 'bayonet' strength of the units and the requirement for internal restructuring and modification of the standard formations. During the period of the final campaigns the average infantry battalion strength fell from about 800 in March to about 350 in September.[116] Despite this Monash noted to a friend in September:

> *I welcome any pretext to take the fewest possible men into action. So long as they have thirty Lewis guns (per battalion) it doesn't very much matter what else they had.*[117]

This quip is interesting in that it tells us much about Monash's approach to war-fighting but we should be wary of reducing the problem of infantry combat on the Western Front to a simplistic formula where the solution was simply a matter of increasing the number of Lewis guns. As the Germans slowly discovered with

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[115] Lt Col AM Ross (GSO1), 'Report on Operations Carried Out By First Aust. Division on the 9th, 10th and 11th August 1918, Culminating in the Capture of Lihons', nd, AWM4, 1/42/43 part 3 appendix 10; Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, pp 655 and 669–670.

[116] Lt Col AM Ross (GSO), HQ Aust Corps G136/334 to 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Aust divs, 24 June 1918, AWM27, item 303/169; Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, pp 252 fn21, 896 and 936; and DAG AIF, HQ AIF Circular Memorandum 21/213, 22 June 1918, AWM27, item 303/152.

[117] Gen J Monash quoted in Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, p 936.

their storm-troop tactics, effective infantry combat requires the right blend of weapons, organisation, training, administration and manpower, and changes to any one of these factors impacts on the ability and performance of the infantry to close with and defeat the enemy. Even in 1918 the solution for the Australian infantry was not simply a matter of giving them more machine-guns. As more Lewis guns became available and the number allocated to each battalion grew from 20 (January), to 24 (March) and finally to 36, there were considerable differences of opinion within the 1st Division as to the best way to employ these weapons. Most infantry COs felt that they should be allocated to the platoons so that gradually each platoon would gain two Lewis guns although this was not unanimous. At least two experienced COs felt that to burden the battalion with any more than 20 Lewis guns, without increasing the number of trained soldiers to serve the guns and transport to carry the ammunition, could be counter-productive and might even lead to loss of effectiveness.[118]

Infantry fighting their own way forward was still a risky proposition even with the advances made in weaponry and tactics. Here the division was fortunate to have a good mix of 'old' and 'new' men leading its battalions. At Lihons seven of the 12 battalions were commanded by the same COs who had led them at Menin Road. All but one had commenced the war as a subaltern in the Citizen Forces and most had been promoted to battalion command within the same unit they had begun their war service. They were all relatively young, combat experienced and keen to learn and adapt. Upon the initiative and skill of these men turned the success of the 'dog-fight' of Lihons.[119]

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[118] Maj GS Cook (CO), HQ 2nd Bn (AIF) Memorandum 18/1092 'Increase of Lewis Guns' to 1st Inf Bde (AIF), 10 March 1918; Maj CD Sasse (CO), HQ 4th Bn (AIF) Memorandum 'Reference your 18/1092 of 9/3/18', 11 March 1918; Lt Col BV Stacy (CO), HQ 1st Bn Memorandum 'CO 44' to HQ 1st Inf Bde (AIF), 10 March 1918; and Lt Col DT Moore (CO), HQ 3rd Bn Memorandum 'Reference Your 18/1092' to HQ 1st Inf Bde (AIF), 11 March 1918. All on AWM27, item 303/199.

[119] The infantry COs in August 1918 (with decorations at that time) were: Bertie Stacy, DSO (1st Bn AIF); Arthur Stevens, CMG DSO (2nd Bn AIF); Donald Moore, DSO (3rd Bn AIF); Cecil Sasse, DSO (4th Bn AIF); John Walstab, DSO (5th Bn AIF); Theodore Ulrich, DSO (6th Bn AIF); Ernest Herrod, DSO (7th Bn AIF); John Mitchell, DSO (8th Bn AIF); Leslie Mullen, DSO (9th Bn AIF); Maurice Wilder-Neligan, CMG DSO DCM (10th Bn AIF); John Newman, DSO (11th Bn AIF); and Charles Elliott, CMG DSO (12th Bn AIF). Most began their war service as subalterns, while Wilder-Neligan being the only one who rose from the ranks. AIF, *Staff Regimental and Graduation List of Officers*, August 1918.

On the negative side the Lihons operations also demonstrated that while the division could quickly adapt to mobile operations, there was still much that was new and novel. In the follow-on operations all too often the attacks ordered by army and corps were disjointed and inadequately coordinated and 'marked by extremely hasty planning'.[120] Indeed some senior commanders, notably Rawlinson, seem to have learned little since the Somme as many of the attacks were allowed to proceed on timings directed by the corps commanders rather than coordinated by army HQ. Even at the lower levels brigades and battalions were often rushed into uncertain situations in recently liberated territory and so in Charles Bean's view Lihons was to 'furnish a classic example of how not to follow up a great attack'.[121]

Fortunately the 1st Division was pulled out of the line after Lihons and given a brief rest. The division next took to the front on the night of 21 August near Chuignes. At 4.45 am on the following morning, advancing behind a tremendous barrage provided by nine field artillery brigades and supported by a 24 Mark V tanks and three carrier tanks, the 1st and 2nd brigades drove forward and by the close of fighting the next day the 1st Australian and 32nd British divisions had driven three German divisions back two-and-a-half kilometres, forcing them out of the old defensive line which they had been occupying since 15 August. Further minor advances pushed the line forward until 26 August and on the following day the 1st Division handed-over to the 2nd Australian Division. Losses over this period amounted to about 1000, while the division took 2500 prisoners and captured a 15-inch railway gun, 21 7.7 cm field guns, a single anti-tank gun, 167 machine-guns and 38 trench mortars.[122]

Back in the line again near Jencourt on 11 September, the 1st Division noted that its return marked a 'definite end of [the] "peaceful penetration" phase' and

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[120] Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, p 682.

[121] Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, p 684.

[122] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, 'Report on Operations in Proyart Sector 22nd August, to 27th Aug, 1918', nd, AWM4, item 1/42/44 part 2 appendix IV; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, pp 733–741 and 743–760.

the next push would require another 'set-piece attack.'[123] One week later, on 18 September, the division did indeed participate in a final set-piece army attack. Having closed back upon the Hindenburg Outpost Line, Rawlinson planned to use Monash's corps as the centre of a three corps attack. The 1st Division was to be the left assault division, with the 4th Division on its right. As is to be expected planning was thorough, as Monash later commented:

> *The contemplated battle presented only a few novel features. The methods of the Corps were becoming stereotyped, and by this time we all began to understand each other so well that most of what I had to say could almost be taken for granted.*[124]

Supported by a superb counter-battery effort, the 1st Division advanced at 5.20 am behind a rolling barrage of shrapnel and bullets and supported by a section of four tanks. Despite having a combined strength of only 2854 men, the 1st and 3rd brigades achieved their objectives for the loss of only 490 all ranks and in the process they captured 1700 prisoners.[125] This marked the last battle for the division and while resting the Armistice ceased the fighting at 11.00 am on 11 November.[126]

Many detractors of the BEF have suggested that the final successes of the 100-day campaign were only achieved by materiel domination. While there is some truth to this, it completely ignores the advances the BEF had made during three years of bloody fighting. It was not just the quantity of the artillery and munitions and its new found accuracy, nor was it the magic of tanks, rather it was the harnessing of these weapons as a combined-arms team. The Germans, on the receiving end of this system, were well aware of its success and its elements:

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[123] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 11 September 1918, AWM4, item 1/42/44 part 1.

[124] Quoted in Peter Pedersen, *Monash as a Military Commander*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1985, pp 273–274.

[125] Casualties are taken from GS HQ Aust Corps, War Diary, nd, appendix 22, 'Report on Operations of Australian Corps', AWM4, item 1/35/10 part 2.

[126] GS HQ Aust Corps, 'Report on Operations of Australian Corps', nd, AWM4, item 1/35/10 part 2 appendix 22; Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, pp 893–932; and Prior and Wilson, *Command on the Western Front*, p 340 and 351–357. Bean gives a higher figure of 677 casualties for both brigades. Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, p 93 fn71.

> *A German officer captured on 21 August 1918 said that a BEF attack with infantry, artillery and tanks would always get through; one with infantry and artillery alone would get through three times out of four; but one with infantry and tanks alone would get through only one time out of four.*[127]

By these odds the 1st Division must be considered lucky to have achieved what it did at Lihons but it was not just luck.

As well as having achieved tactical and firepower superiority over their opponents, by 1918 the BEF was also enjoying supremacy in intelligence. The surprise of the Amiens attack may have dissipated on the following days but there is no doubt that the Germans were taken by complete surprise on 8 August. Part of this success was the secrecy involved in moving the Canadian Corps and 1st Division south. In addition by the autumn of 1918 the BEF knew the German order of battle 'almost letter-perfect while the Germans were at least once grossly mistaken about the location of 25 percent of the allied divisions, especially the British ones.'[128] The success of British signals deception at this time was a crucial factor in the success of the BEF at Amiens and later, just as failures in signals security had contributed to the losses and failures on the Somme in 1916.[129]

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[127] Gen Sir John Coleridge in conversation with Brig Sir James Edmunds, 12 March 1938, PRO: Cab45/184, quoted in Col AR Gregory, 'The Choreographed Battle Within the Manoeuvrist Approach—The Hundred Days Campaign of 1918', in Group Captain PW Gray (ed), *Military History into the 21st Century*, The Occasional No 43, Strategic and Combat Studies Institute, Shrivenham, 2001, p 35.

[128] Ferris, 'The British Army and Signals Intelligence in the Field During the First World War', p 45.

[129] For an example of the highly detailed information available on the German forces down at divisional level see: Capt A Laughlin (for GSO1 HQ 1st Aust Div), 'Intelligence Summary No 1', 24 August 1918, AWM4, 1/42/43 part 2 appendix 2.

It has become accepted wisdom that the Germans perfected modern combined-arms tactics on the Western Front during the Great War.[130] In their otherwise excellent study of the infantry in the twentieth century John English and Bruce Gudmundsson capture the essence of this view:

> *Some ingredients that went into Stosstrupp tactics were present in the other armies which fought on the Western Front. The British and French soon became as keen on trench mortars and machine guns as the Germans. The Canadian and Australian troops that fought alongside the British developed considerable expertise in trench raiding. Neither the French nor the forces of the British Empire, however, made the full transition from the linear tactics of the nineteenth century to the Stosstrupp tactics of the twentieth.*[131]

The foregoing does not reflect the experience of the 1st Division.

The 1st Division arrived in France in mid-1916 with a reputation based on its wild dash at the landings and reckless courage at Lone Pine. This reputation however, was gained in a totally different situation to which it found itself on the Western Front. In France was a different kind of war where individual courage mattered less than skilful coordination of operations waged on an industrial scale. In two-and-a-half years of bloody fighting the 1st Division learned that the war was to be won through the exploitation of combined-arms operations, which in turn had to be underpinned by sound administration, realistic training and coordinated by robust command and control arrangements. In the end it was the ability of its commanders and their men to master these that established the 1st Australian Division as one of the finest fighting formations on the Western Front—on the defence and on the attack.

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[130] Notable detractors of the BEF include: Bruce Gudmundsson, *On Artillery*, Prager, Westport, 1993; Bruce Gudmundsson, *Stormtroop Tactics: Innovation in the German Army, 1914–1918*, Prager, Westport, 1989; Martin Samuels, *Command or Control? Command, Training and Tactics in the British and German Armies, 1888–1918*, Frank Cass, London, 1995; and Martin Samuels, *Doctrine and Dogma: German and British Infantry Tactics in the First World War*, Greenwood Press, Westport, 1992.

[131] John A English and Bruce I Gudmundsson, *On Infantry: Revised Edition*, Praeger, Westport, 1994, p 22.

CHAPTER 8

'GOOD-BYE TO ALL THAT': DEMOBILISATION[1]

The Armistice struck the 1st Division like a bolt of lightning out of the clear autumn day. While all ranks realised that the campaigns of 1918 had gone well, few anticipated that the war would end so suddenly and most suspected a rest in the winter would be followed by another spring campaign in 1919. Many cynically joked that the war would still be raging for another two decades. Unexpected or not, the Armistice spelled the beginning of the end for the 1st Division. With the decision not to employ Australian troops as part of the occupation force, the Australian Government and the AIF's senior leadership were anxious to repatriate their troops as quickly as possible. Likewise, the troops saw themselves as temporary soldiers and once the job of beating the Germans was done most just wanted to return to home and get out of uniform.[2]

Although it would take time to confirm that hostilities were not going to recommence, the demobilisation of the 1st Division began soon after the Armistice. This period, from 12 November 1918 through until the division disappeared as a separate identity on 24 March 1919, amounts to just 133 days. This is slightly longer than the period required to mobilise the division in 1914 although the break-up of those activities follows a similar pattern with the time divided between general operational activities related to demobilisation (21 days), collective training and education (21 days), and administration (91 days). This chapter will chart just how the military authorities accomplished this task.[3]

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[1] I have borrowed the title for this chapter from Robert Graves wartime memoirs. Graves, *Good-Bye To All That*, passim.

[2] For a recent assessment of the Armistice see: Hugh Cecil and Peter H Liddle (eds), *At the Eleventh Hour: reflections, hopes and anxieties at the closing of the Great War, 1918*, Leo Cooper, Barnsley, 1998.

[3] It can be argued that the 1st Division's demobilisation began later, perhaps after it moved to the Charleroi area in Belgium in mid-December however, this study uses the day following the Armistice as the beginning and the day of its amalgamation with the 4th Australian Division as the end. GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, 12 November 1918–24 March 1919, AWM4, 1/42/46–1/42/50.

DEMOBLISATION AND REPATRIATION

Following the Armistice, the allies' plan was to march to the German frontier as the Germans retired. Monash's Australian Corps, still a part of the Fourth Army, took its place as the rearmost corps. When the march could not be sustained due to supply difficulties, the Australian divisions found themselves centred on Charleroi in Belgium, with the 1st Division about Presles. It was here that the 1st Division began the process of disbanding.[4]

Although usually used synonymously, the terms 'demobilisation' and 'repatriation' are different. Demobilisation is the largely administrative process whereby the component formations and units of the AIF were broken-up, their stores and equipment returned or sold, and its personnel discharged. Repatriation describes the process of returning the soldiers home, a major part of which involved returning the troops to their place of enlistment although in post-war Australia it also came to include assisting 'returned men' with the transition back into civil society. The confusion in Australia over these two quite separate, if linked tasks is clearly evident in the problems encountered when the AIF raised its own Demobilisation and Repatriation Section of the Administrative HQ in London and began work on 8 April 1918. Interdepartmental concerns in Australia between the Minister of Repatriation, Senator Edward Millen, and the Minister of Defence, Senator George Pearce, led to further delays and eventually, as the availability of shipping tightened, the Australian Government was forced to buy itself more time by changing the AIF's period of service from the duration of the war 'and six months thereafter' to a period to be determined by proclamation by the Governor-General.[5]

Although the sudden end of the war took most belligerents by surprise, the Australian Government moved quickly to begin the process of returning its troops home and on 21 November it appointed Monash as the Director-General

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[4] Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, p 1053.

[5] Department of Repatriation and Demobilisation, *The History of the Department of Repatriation & Demobilisation, from November, 1918 to September, 1919*, Department of Repatriation and Demobilisation (AIF), London, 1 October 1919; Clement John Lloyd and Jacqueline Rees, *The Last Shilling: A History of Repatriation in Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1994; Faraday, 'Half the Battle', chapter 10; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, p 1054.

of the newly formed Department of Repatriation and Demobilisation, subsuming the earlier raised section of the AIF's Administrative HQ. At this time there were between 167,000 and 185,000 AIF men and women to be repatriated.[6]

The largest group of Australian service personnel to be repatriated were in Europe, where between 87,000 and 95,000 troops were serving with the BEF. Of this total the 1st Division made-up about 15,000 and as part of the first contingent to leave Australia in 1914, the division might have expected to be among the first formations repatriated. Certainly the Australian Government favoured the return of the troops in their existing formations however, Monash and Prime Minister William Morris Hughes agreed that it would be fairer to organise repatriation on an individual basis of 'first to come, first to go'.[7]

Monash and his staff developed a scheme that saw the AIF classify all troops into a series of quotas, each approximately 1000 strong, which was a normal trainload/shipload. Selected on the basis of their length of service, each quota was drawn from all services and organised as a unit under the command of officers known to the men. As each quota was formed it was dispatched to the old Australian Base Depot at Le Havre to begin the journey home.[8]

This process of withdrawing quotas led the 1st Division to gradually fade away. As quotas were withdrawn, the remnants of units were amalgamated once they fell below 40 percent of their Establishment. Eventually even these units were reduced to cadres of specialists who finalised the handing-over of equipment and campsites to the British and French authorities. It was for the most part a well-managed affair albeit not without its problems.

Although the repatriation of the division's personnel was remarkably smooth not all aspects of demobilisation proceeded equally well. In particular the Ordnance

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[6] Various sources provide slightly different totals for the AIF's strength in 1918. These estimates are based on the totals given in: AIF, *History of the Department of Repatriation and Demobilisation*, p 5; Bean, *Anzac to Amiens*, p 516; Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, p 1057, fn29, Scott, *AOH*, Vol X, p 825; and Butler, *AOHMS*, Vol III, pp 710, 882 and 891.

[7] Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, p 1058.

[8] AIF, *History of the Department of Repatriation and Demobilisation*, p 8; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, pp 1060–1061.

staff had significant difficulties in acquitting the war stores that had to be returned to store before unit accounts could be closed and the remaining personnel shipped home. In early 1919 an exasperated Assistant Director for Ordnance Services was writing to his divisional counterparts decrying:

> *The Ordnance side of demobilization is not progressing favourably. Roughly speaking 160 units have returned their equipment to DADsOS or are supposed to have done so, but up to the present no satisfactory lists…complete with indents covering deficiencies and 4 copies of the certificates to be rendered…have been received by me. Immediate action must therefore be taken to have all outstanding matters finalized and "Q" Branch of Divisions asked to assist in making units do their part, otherwise the whole demobilization of equipment will have to be held up*.[9]

Understandably most unit staff just wanted to return whatever equipment they held and be done with it, the army on the other hand had to account for the millions of pounds worth of publicly-funded weapons and equipment that had been issued during the war and demobilisation could not be proceed until the paperwork was complete—in quadruplicate. While the logisticians grappled with finalising the accounts, the processing of the returning quotas gathered pace.[10]

On leaving their billets and unit encampments in Belgium the 1st Division quotas were dispatched to the Australian Base Depot at Le Havre. There the quotas were received, deloused and refitted in a single day and held in preparation for shipment to Britain. The 1st Division quotas spent between three and ten days in transit and on average most soldiers spent about five days at Le Havre before being shipped to Britain.[11]

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[9] Assistant Director Ordnance Services (Demobilisation), Aust Corps Memorandum to DADOS 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th divs and Aust Corps Troops, 22 March 1919, AWM27, item 303/155.

[10] For the logistics problems during demobilisation see: Tilbrook, *To the Warrior His Arms*, pp 87–94.

[11] Dr JK Haken, 'Colonel CH Davis CBE VD MID and the Australian Base Depots in France', *Sabretache*, Vol 20, No 4 (October–December 1979) pp 46–47; and Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, p 1061.

Across the English Channel the AIF depots in Britain were reorganised to meet the demands of repatriation. In effect each Australian division was given a group of camps to house its quotas and these were placed under the command of an officer from that division. Number 1 Group, which were the 1st Division's camps, were based around the old Overseas Training Brigade at Longbridge Deverill, where it had accommodation for four quotas, and the old Artillery Camp at Heytesbury where there was accommodation for another two quotas. Number 1 Group was placed under the command of General 'Cast Iron Jimmy' Heane with Lieutenant Colonel Ernest 'Dad' Herrod as his second-in-command.[12] These depots in Britain were first cleared by repatriating men discharged from hospital, with 40,000 convalescents being dispatched home separately under medical control. This then freed up space allowing the quotas to be brought from France where they took two weeks' leave and then waited their turn.[13]

While waiting in Britain and Belgium, officers and soldiers were given the opportunity to attend classes as part of the AIF Education Scheme. This scheme was aimed at those who wished to gain civilian skills by attending educational institutions or by working in industry or agriculture. Officially known as 'Non-Military Employment' the program became known to the troops as 'Non-Military Enjoyment'. Bean acknowledges that of the 47,000 men enrolled in these courses in Belgium and France probably only 10,000 actually attended but not all of this effort was wasted.[14]

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[12] Herrod was an Australian-born, Citizen Forces officer when he joined the AIF in 1914 as Signalling Officer 2nd Battalion (AIF). He served on Gallipoli where he took command of a company during the August offensive. Following the withdrawal he saw further service on the Western Front, distinguishing himself at Pozières. Later in the year he was promoted major and in the following year he temporarily commanded the 2nd Battalion before taking command of the 7th Battalion in May 1917. For his war services he was appointed a CMG and awarded the DSO. NAA: B2455, file HERROD EE LIEUTENANT COLONEL; and Nulli Secundus, '2nd Battalion Stalwarts: Lt-Col Herrod', *The Reveille*, Vol 3, No 9 (31 May 1930) p 15.

[13] Maj Gen Sir C Rosenthal (GOC AIF Depots UK), Special Order Demobilisation: CR AIF 42379/ad 'Re-Organization No 262', 23 March 1919, AWM27, item 302/69, part 1; and AIF, *History of the Department of Repatriation and Demobilisation*, pp 70–71.

[14] Bean, *Anzac to Amiens*, p 516.

A good example of one of the soldiers who made the most of post-war training was Major Julian Aarons. Aarons was a mining engineer who had served with the 11th Battalion (AIF) on Gallipoli and the Western Front. He ended the war as the permanent President of Courts-Martial for the AIF depots in Britain. After the Armistice he applied for Non-Military Employment and took a post-graduate course at the Royal School of Mines in London. During the course he and another student discovered a new means of processing sulphide ores and so he decided to remain in Britain to exploit this discovery. He resigned his commission in Britain and remained there developing his business interests before making his way back to Australia in the early 1920s to resume work in the mining industry. Others completed training in the agricultural and textiles industries and brought these new skills home with them.[15]

The other key activity designed to channel the interest of war-weary, restless soldiers was the 1st Division's second favourite pastime—sport. Following close on the heels of the Armistice the Australian Corps moved quickly to set up a broad sporting competition to keep its fit and aggressive young men busy and out of mischief. The corps appointed Major Sydney Middleton, DSO (19th Battalion AIF), a sportsman with a worldwide reputation as an oarsman and Rugby footballer, as the Corps Sports Officer. Under Middleton's direction a Corps Sports Committee was formed and each division formed its own committees down to unit level. To the great relief of the troops sport was to a large extent then substituted for drill in unit training programs.[16]

While some made the most of the post-war sporting and training opportunities, many were too restless. Indeed the majority of 1st Division soldiers occupied their time in France and Britain relaxing, playing cards and socialising, including a number who were keen to consolidate wartime romances. Most were just trying to contain the enormous restlessness they felt as they waited to return home. Despite this restlessness and growing frustration, the AIF's leadership

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[15] NAA: B2455, file BOYD J.

[16] Lt GH Goddard, *Soldiers and Sportsmen: An Account of the Sporting Activities of the Australian Imperial Force During the Period Between November, 1918, and September, 1919*, AIF Sports Control Board, London, 1919, p 9; and BGGS, Aust Corps Memorandum 188/1/1385, 3 December 1918, AWM27, item 302/69, part 2.

was remarkably successful in limiting the turmoil that could have swept through the contingent and in general repatriation was handled with considerable skill and efficiency. Of all of the major forces in Britain at the end of the war, the AIF was the only one not to suffer large-scale demobilisation riots.

The 1st Division gradually melted away as batches of soldiers were formed into shiploads and dispatched to Australia. The first 1st Division quota (Number 1) entrained at Charleroi on 20 January 1919 and passed through Le Harve to arrive in Britain five days later. The quota was housed at Longbridge Deverill until 21 March when it embarked for Australia on the *City of Poona* at Southampton. Further quotas followed and units gradually shrank to be amalgamated with one of their sister units until these skeletons were combined into formation organisations. Typical is the experience of the 1st Brigade (AIF) which first linked its 1st and 4th battalions and its 2nd and 3rd battalions on 7 February 1919. By 22 March even these linked units were so small that they were folded into a single brigade unit under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Donald Moore. Moore, the 26 year old veteran CO of the 3rd Battalion (AIF), now faced one of his most challenging assignments of the war as he had to maintain good order and discipline among the last elements of the brigade, with men who were chaffing under the burden of military life and impatient to get home.[17]

The day after Moore took command of the 1st Brigade Battalion the 1st Division disappeared. By this time so many of its veterans had left that it was amalgamated with and came under command of the 4th Division and this new combined group became known as the 'A' Divisional Group. The last 1st Division quota (Number 58), which combined troops from both the 1st and 4th divisions departed Britain exactly four months later aboard the *Suevic* on 23 July. Even after the divisional quotas ended, mixed quotas continued to embark for another two months with the last official shipload of Australian troops

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[17] AIF, *History of the Department of Repatriation and Demobilisation*, Appendix E, p 115, and Appendix I, p 125; Capt RR Agnew (BM), 1st Inf Bde Order No 137 'Amalgamations', 21 March 1919, AWM27, item 303/208; and KR White, 'Moore, Donald Ticehurst (1892–1972)', *ADB*, Vol 10, pp 563–564.

departing Britain on 22 September carrying 1308 AIF personnel and one Belgium lad.[18]

To cope with the small number of wives who had travelled to Britain to be closer to their husbands during the war and the larger number of Australian servicemen who had married war brides, 'family ships' were arranged at intervals throughout the process to carry the men with wives and young children. Charles Bean estimated that in 1919 AIF soldiers in England were marrying at a rate of 150 a week and in total 15,386 soldiers' wives, fiancées and children were embarked for Australia after the war. All in all it was a remarkable achievement with just six months separating the departure of the 1st Division's first quota from France and the embarkation of its last quota. For the AIF however, finalisation of its administration would take nearly two more years and the AIF did not officially disappear until 31 March 1921.[19]

THE RETURN HOME

Although the AIF's demobilisation and repatriation scheme allowed the force to wither away in a manner that distressed some and could have led to widespread ill-discipline, the system's management combined fairness with the maintenance of discipline. This undoubtedly struck a chord with the returning veterans who displayed considerable restraint in the face of the inevitable delays. The AIF administration made every effort to explain the system to the troops and to keep them informed about the reasons for any delays. In all it took 176 voyages, leaving between December 1918 and December 1919, to return most of the troops to Australia.

For the 1st Division soldiers the voyage home lasted between five and six weeks. Duties were light, discipline relatively lax (even by Australian standards) and gambling was rife. Most voyages back to Australia were uneventful although there were some disturbances on the troopships at sea and ashore,

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[18] Lt Col J Lavarack (GSO1), 4th Aust Div GS Circular No 90 'Amalgamation with 1st Australian Division', 19 March 1919, AWM27, item 303/155; Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, p 1061; AIF, *History of the Department of Repatriation and Demobilisation*, Appendix E, p 118, and Appendix I, p 126.

[19] Bean, *AOH*, Vol VI, p 1061.

particularly when some men found themselves quarantined on reaching Australia because of the outbreak of the influenza epidemic.[20] For many however, the return was a happy if perplexing experience, as William Lorimer, a 5th Battalion (AIF) original, recorded when he made his first landfall back in Australia:

> *Pulled into the wharf at midday. We were allowed ashore shortly afterwards, for four hours. Went to the YMCA and had a free feed of cakes, fruit, tea etc, which was fine. The fruit & cake was delicious. Got on a tram and went down to South Beach and had a good swim. Had a bit of a look round Freemantle then came back to the YMCA where a lot of us had our photo taken, had some more to eat then went aboard again. We pulled out about 7.30 in the evening. We had a band to play us off & all the locals started whistling, and a lot of people waved us good by* [sic]*. You would have thought we were going to the war not coming back… Now for the last lap.*[21]

Five days later he returned to Melbourne, just 11 days short of having been away to the war for four years.

Once back home the veterans such as William Lorimer finalised the last of their administration as soldiers. Disembarkation leave and the payment of their deferred pay were among the last acts before discharge. After this they could swap their uniform for 'civvies' and then begin the rest of their lives.

The division's veterans dispersed across the length and breadth of Australia. As Australia's first truly national organisation for export the 1st Division represented a cross section of the society from which it was drawn. Some veterans went home wherever that might be, while others took up the offer of the Soldier

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[20] AE 'Bert' Denman, 'In The Beginning', *Sabretache*, Vol 28, No 4 (October–December 1987) p 21; Smallman-Raynor and Cliff, *War Epidemics*, pp 579–593; and H McQueen, '"Spanish Flu" 1919: political, medical and social aspects', *Medical Journal of Australia*, Issue 1 (1975) pp 565–570.

[21] Pte W Lorimer (5th Bn AIF), diary entry, 10 February 1919, SLV: MS 10481, MSB 221.

Settlement Scheme and tried their hand at farming, although the allocation of small blocks in what was often marginal land meant that many failed. Some married and raised children, while others drifted in search of work in the lean years of the Depression.[22]

In 1937, when the Returned Soldiers' and Sailors' Imperial League of Australia published its coronation issue, about 50,000 returned men had passed away since the war, leaving some 228,000 Great War veterans. Of these a little over 76,000 ex-members of the AIF were receiving some form of pension as a result of war disabilities and over 22,000 were under continuous medical treatment. Some 1700 ex-soldiers were in-patients in various hospitals and institutions, and the annual outpatient attendances averaged more than 140,000. There were 562 ex-diggers in mental institutions. These veterans were spread across Australia although concentrated in New South Wales and Victoria. It is impossible to know how many of them were ex-1st Division although they would still have numbered somewhere around 55,000.[23]

Wherever they settled, most soldiers just wanted to re-establish their lives; but this was not an easy task and for many the war would maintain a grip on them for the rest of their lives. As one veteran recalled:

> *These troops…were just not the same as when they left home a year, two or three years ago. They were older now, but far older than their years, for they had seen things which no ordinary man*

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[22] Kent Fedorowich, *Unfit for Heroes: Reconstruction and Soldier Settlement in the Empire Between the Wars*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1995, pp 144–190.

[23] In all more than 80,000 men served with the 1st Division during the Great War and this represents about one-quarter of the 331,781 Australians who served overseas during the war. The estimate of divisional throughput is based on the turnover of the infantry battalions, which averaged at least 6000 per battalion. For example nearly 5900 men passed through the ranks of the 5th Battalion, while the 10th and 11th battalions respectively had slightly under and slightly over 9000 men, and the 12th Battalion claimed over 8000 members. When added to the smaller turnover of personnel in the other divisional units the estimate of 80,000 must be considered conservative. AW Keown, *Forward with the Fifth: A History of the Fifth Battalion, 1st AIF*, Specialty Print, Melbourne, 1921, revised by Carl Johnson, History House, Melbourne, 2002, p xi; Cecil Lock, *The Fighting 10th: A South Australian Centenary Souvenir of the 10th Battalion*, Webb and Son, Adelaide, 1935 pp 6 and 14; Belford, *Legs-Eleven*, p 665; and Newton, *Story of the Twelfth*, p 12; Butler, *AOHMS*, Vol III, p 880, Table 10; and Spedding, *Official Year Book 1937 (Coronation Issue)*, pp 193 and 213–221.

> *would see in a life time. They had faced death many times and had themselves suffered and seen their mates suffer, wounded, gassed, maimed and killed. These things just had to leave an impression on their minds, their very lives and would live with them for many a long year.*[24]

Having survived the maelstrom of war and returned to some sort of normality was a surreal experience for the veteran. Sympathetic family and loved ones helped even as they too struggled with the changes that had come over their sons, brothers, and husbands. Neither could fully understand the other since their experiences of the war were so different.

In many respects the experiences of 1st Division veterans are like those of any veteran group—all but impossible to summarise because they are as varied as the individuals themselves. What can be said is that most coped as best they could, while some never recovered physically or emotionally, and many died young because of their war service. Others however, went on to long and live productive lives.

Whatever their individual circumstances, the veterans of the 1st Division spread throughout society leaving an imprint (good and bad) on nearly every facet of post-war society. From politics, to academia, business, and every aspect of cultural and professional life, there were 1st Division veterans. From the ranks of the old 1st Divvy were to come a governor-general (Baron Casey); members of parliament (Harold 'Pompey' Elliott, John Gellibrand, Neville Howse, and Geoffrey Street); a New South Wales state governor (Sir John Northcott); a Queensland premier (Edward 'Ned' Hanlon); the first Commissioner of the Australian Public Service (Cyril Brudenell White); ambassadors (Thomas 'Bill' Glasgow, William Hodgson and Iven Mackay); judges (Andrew Clark, Edmund Drake-Brockman, Sir Charles Duffy and Bertie Stacy); a chairman of the Australian Broadcasting Commission (Sir Richard Boyer); a university chancellor (Sir Arthur Dean); poets (Leon Gellert and Harley Matthews), authors and scriptwriters (Albert Facey, Bill Harney and Edward Timms); a theatrical

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[24] Denman, 'In the Beginning', p 21.

producer (George Eaton); a champion of the Australian film industry (Ernest Turnbull); a newspaper editor (Havelock Ashton); businessmen (Charles Hardy); a wine industry pioneer (Desmond Du Rieu); the founder of GJ Coles Pty Ltd (Sir Arthur Coles); the man who gifted the Sydney Myer Music Bowl to the City of Melbourne (Sir Norman Myer); a butcher's apprentice who became a neurosurgeon (Sir Albert Coates); a founding fellow of the Royal Australian College of Physicians (Henry Fry); a 'Wallaby captain' (William 'Willie' Watson); a 'green' landscaping revolutionary (Ellis 'Rocky' Stones); a renown art critic (Basil Burdett); the philanthropist who created Legacy (John Gellibrand); and a Director of the Australian War Memorial (John Treloar), who presided over the spiritual home of the Anzac legend.[25]

THE LEGACY

For all of the tragedy of its Great War service the 1st Division created an enduring legacy for the AIF, the post-war Australian Army and the Australian nation. The Australian half of the Anzac legend—often referred to as the digger tradition—began with the 1st Division's seizure of that tiny enclave on the Gallipoli Peninsula. It was a reputation that was further garnished by the 2nd Brigade's gallant attack at Krithia and the 1st Brigade's epic capture and defence of Lone Pine. Those volunteers who later joined the AIF did so with an expectation that they would have to maintain the reputation established by the 1st Division's originals.

This tradition was further reinforced following the withdrawal from Gallipoli when the 1st Division turned from being the cradle of the fledgling AIF to become the nursery for an expanded Australian army. Not only were the division's veteran units split to form a nucleus for the other AIF infantry divisions created in 1916 but its officers and non-commissioned officers were also spread throughout the whole force. By the end of the war all but one of the AIF divisions in France was commanded by an ex-1st Division officer and nine of the 15 AIF infantry brigades were commanded by officers who began their service with the 1st Division. Its role in the creation of the Anzac legend and the AIF also put the 1st

[25] All those listed above have been the subject of an entry in the *ADB*, see relevant volumes.

Division in a powerful position to lay the foundations for the 2nd Australian Imperial Force (2nd AIF) during World War II.[26]

In January 1941 the 6th Australian Division attacked and captured the Italian fortress of Bardia. It was the Australian Army's first significant battlefield success of World War II. The 6th Division, as the premier division of the 2nd AIF, was the heir to the old 1st Division and this formation was largely raised and trained by men who had served in the 1st AIF. At Bardia the 6th was commanded by Iven Mackay (ex-GOC 1st Infantry Brigade AIF) and he was serving under Thomas Blamey (ex-GSO1 1st Division). Many of Mackay's brigade and battalion commanders were also Great War veterans including John Mitchell who commanded the 8th Battalion (AIF) in France as a 26-year old, winning the DSO and Bar. In 1939 he was given the unique honour of raising the 2/8th Battalion. Like his Great War predecessors of 1914 however, he at the age of 48 (and the oldest of the 6th Division COs) was just too old for the wear and tear of a new war and after solid service he and most of the older COs were eventually replaced.[27] The importance of these veterans however, was not that they represented some sentimental, living link with the Anzac legend, rather it was that their earlier service with the 1st Division had taught them the concrete importance of strong leadership, organisation and staff work, sound administration and thorough training. It was on these lessons that the Australian Army's World War II success was built.[28]

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[26] For the importance of the early 1st Division activities such as the Battle of the Wazir and the landings on Gallipoli in the creation of the legend see: Bill Gammage, 'The Crucible: The Establishment of the Anzac Tradition', in McKernan and Brown, *Australia*, pp 147–166. For an account of the emergence of the 'digger' stereotype see: LL Robson, 'The Australian Soldier: Formation of a Stereotype', in McKernan and Brown, *Australia*, pp 313–337; and Robin Gerster, *Big Noting: The Heroic Theme in Australian War Writing*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1987. For a renunciation of the myth see: Jane Ross, *The Myth of the Digger: The Australian Soldier in Two World Wars*, Hale and Iremonger, Sydney, 1985.

[27] Garth Pratten, *Australian Battalion Commanders in the Second World War*, Cambridge University Press, Port Melbourne, 2009, pp 53, 105–110 and 351.

[28] Long, *To Benghazi*, pp 51–52 and 204; and Craig Stockings, *Bardia: Myth, Reality and the Heirs of Anzac*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2009, especially Part Three, pp 288–402.

Harold Walker, the longest serving GOC of the 1st Division died in 1934 aged 72, still bearing the scars his Gallipoli wounds. His old right hand man, Thomas Blamey, died in 1951 and on his deathbed the government appointed him Australia's first native-born field marshal. James 'Cast Iron Jimmy' Heane died in 1954, while the division's last GOC Thomas Glasgow, after a distinguished career as a soldier and diplomat passed away in the following year. 'Iven the Terrible' Mackay, who rose to command the Second Australian Army during World War II and was High Commissioner to India, died in 1966 aged 84, the same year as Ernest 'Dad' Herrod. John Mitchell, the last of the COs, passed away three years later.[29]

By 1990 on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Gallipoli landings, there were an estimated 100 Anzac originals alive when about half made the pilgrimage to Gallipoli. Early in 1996 there were probably only 19 left when their stories were collected and published. Among the last of these veterans were four 1st Division men: Claude Fankhauser (5th Battalion AIF) who was blinded at Pozières; Ted Matthews (1st Divisional Signals Company AIF) who was the last survivor of the Gallipoli landings; Harry Newhouse (4th Battalion AIF) who lost a brother on the Peninsula; and Bert Smith (1st Divisional Signals Company AIF). All four lived on into their second century and became the last of the original 1st Division men to have served on Gallipoli.[30] On the night of 7/8 May 2003 in the leafy Sydney suburb of Turramurra, Robert Dunford passed away. Dunford had enlisted in the AIF in April 1918 at the age of 19 and he joined the 1st Divisional

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[29] AJ Sweeting, 'Walker, Sir Harold Bridgwood (1862–1934)', *ADB*, Vol 12, p 359; DM Horner, 'Blamey, Sir Thomas Albert (1884–1951)', *ADB*, Vol 13, p 201; JG Williams, 'Heane, James (1874–1954)', *ADB*, Vol 9, p 248; Ralph Harry, 'Glasgow, Sir Thomas William (1876–1955)', *ADB*, Vol 9, p 23; Jeffrey Grey, 'MacKay, Sir, Iven Giffard (1882–1966)', *ADB*, Vol 15, pp 235–236; RE Cowley, 'Herrod, Ernest Edward (1885–1966)', *ADB*, Vol 9, pp 274–275; and James Wood, 'Mitchell, John Wesley (Jack) (1891–1969)', *ADB*, Vol 15, pp 382–383.

[30] The last Australian Great War soldier was Peter Casserly who passed away in June 2005 and although at the time of his death two other Australian Great War servicemen were still alive, neither had served overseas during the war. S Rintoul, 'Last of our Great War fighters fades away', *The Australian*, 19 October 2005, pp 1 and 4; and Tony Stephens, *The Last Anzacs–Gallipoli 1915*, Allen & Kemsley, Sydney, 1996, pp 21, 36–39, 60–62, 64–67, and 80–83.

Ammunition Column (AIF) in France, arriving after the Armistice. When he died at the age of 104 he was the 1st Division's last Great War soldier.[31]

[31] The 1st Division's last combat veteran was Ernest 'Ernie' Peddell (2nd Bn AIF) who died on 6 September 2000 aged 101. The Hon Bruce Scott MP (Minister for Veterans' Affairs), 'Vale Corporal Ernest Peddell-We Will Remember': DVA 81, 7 September 2000; The Hon. Danna Vale MP (Minster for Veteran's Affairs), 'Media Release: Gunner Robert Dunford—We Will Remember Him', 8 May 2003. Accessed from http://minister.dva.gov.au/media_releases/2003/may/va043.htm on 10 September 2003.

CONCLUSION

The popular view of the Great War is one of unending carnage; of brave but naive soldiers being left unceasingly in muddy trenches until they were slaughtered by incompetent chateau generals in battles conceived with unimaginative nineteenth century tactics that pitted flesh against metal; and in the end they achieved nothing. As with all myths there is some element of truth behind these generalisations but, at least in the case of the 1st Australian Division, it is only a small and ultimately a misleading degree of truth.

The 1st Division's wartime existence spanned four-and-half-years from when it was raised on 15 August 1914 through until it merged with the 4th Australian Division on 24 March 1919—a total of 1683 days. Geographically the division spent: 68 days in Australia (four percent of its service); 71 days at sea (four percent of its service); 207 days in Egypt (12 percent of its service); six days on the Mediterranean Islands and 239 days on the Gallipoli Peninsula (15 percent of its service); and 1092 days in France and Belgium (65 percent of its service).

The division's service was broken into six main periods covering: mobilisation (15 August–8 December 1914); training in Egypt (9 December 1914–1 April 1915); the Gallipoli campaign (2 April 1915–8 January 1915); another period following the withdrawal from the Peninsula back in Egypt reorganising and training (9 January–27 March 1916); service on the Western Front (28 March 1916–11 November 1918); and demobilisation (12 November 1918–24 March 1919). Throughout these periods the division spent all of its time engaged in three main activities—training, administration and operations.[1]

Of the divisional activities, more than a half of its time (886 days) was devoted to operations. The majority of this effort was spent on the defensive (750 days or 86 percent of its operations time), either on Gallipoli or on the Western Front. In all, less than one month of the division's service was spent on the offensive (29 days or eight percent of its operations time and less than two percent of total service). Time-wise, administration was the second of the trinity occupying

[1] See Annex B for a summary of the divisional activities.

423 days. This time was divided between administrative moves (205 days), personnel administration (188 days) and a small element devoted to logistics (30 days). Training came a close third to administration, accounting for the remaining 374 days, with individual training occupying about one-quarter (103 days) and collective training occupying the other three-quarters (271 days including ten days for combined training). So in the broad, the 1st Division devoted just over a year to training and another year to administration to ensure that it could function for the other two years fighting the enemy.[2]

But the amount of time spent engaged on an activity is only part of the 1st Division's story. All modern military organisations are complex, far more so than is generally acknowledged. At the time of its creation the 1st Division was the most complex large-scale, national organisation the Commonwealth had ever created. It was certainly the most diverse and monumental institution created in just one month. The size of a small city, it included all of the fighting arms and support services needed to sustain, train and fight by itself; and it was a mobile city that could pack-up and move itself in a day. Its complexity is reflected not only in the range of activities undertaken but also in the way these changed. The division rarely stood still for long and adaptation and innovation were its hallmarks. While the learning process may have been slow, painful and uneven, it was rarely stagnant. From almost the moment of its birth the 1st Division was a growing, living, maturing organism.

The 1st Division was born of an error not a great error; actually a small one, or rather just a simple misunderstanding. Australia's pre-war plans for an expeditionary force were little more than a contingency plan hidden in the desk draw of a staff officer. When war broke out however, instead of raising a combined Australian and New Zealand Division, as contemplated in the pre-war plan, the Australian Government thought that Canada had offered a larger contingent and not to be outdone it offered its own larger, purely Australian formation. And so by happenstance the 1st Australian Division was born.

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[2] GS HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, August 1914–March 1919, AWM4, items 1/42/1–1/42/50; and Admin Staff HQ 1st Aust Div, War Diary, August 1914–May 1919, AWM4, items 1/43/1–1/43/52.

Accident or not, the mobilisation of the division was an enormous and unprecedented challenge for a nation that had never raised such an organisation. That it was created in the remarkably short time of one month was a significant achievement even though the child was seriously flawed. Strong in manpower, weak in firepower and with a command and control system better suited to the Crimea, the 1st Division was ill fitted for the war to which it was committed. Beneath a thin veneer of experience provided by a handful of veteran Australian and British regulars, the bulk of the division was woefully under trained. Even the one-in-three who claimed to have served with the part-time forces might boast several years of service however, their actual training amounted only to a few weeks each year and their contribution to the division's early performance has been over-emphasised.[3] As Bill Glasgow, the last GOC of the 1st Division and himself a long-serving citizen-soldier observed after the war:

> *Although during the war period we had services of a large number of experienced and enthusiastic citizen force officers and men, it took approximately six months to train them to a sufficient standard to enable them to take part in military operations. Speaking from personal experience, I may say that, although we established our organisation in 1914, and started training in Egypt at the beginning of 1915, the force did not reach the zenith of its efficiency until the autumn of 1917.*[4]

Therein lies the great truth of the 1st Division's wartime experience. It took time to build an efficient administrative system, it took time to train officers and men to a battle worthy state and even then it took three bloody years of hard campaigning before the division reached its peak.

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[3] While about one-third of the original 1st Division transferred from the Citizen Forces or had served in the older militia units, post-war estimates suggest that only about 15 percent of the AIF were drawn from the Citizen Forces. Bean, *AOH*, Vol I, p 60; 'Summary of—Personnel Statistics', attached to 1st Aust Div, 'Division Orders, No 43', 27 January 1915, AWM27, item 352/19; and COA, *Parliamentary Debates*, Vol 89 (13 August 1919), p 11536.

[4] COA, *Parliamentary Debates*, (11 August 1926), p 5240 quoted in Edgar, *To Villers-Bretenneux*, p 264.

The inadequacies of the division were cruelly exposed on the scrub-covered ridges of Gallipoli. In 1915 the division's manoeuvre elements had very limited organic firepower. It was an organisation with more than two-thirds of its strength held in the infantry brigades, essentially armed only with rifle and bayonet. Although the gunners made up the second largest grouping within the division their problem was the number and size of their guns and their inability to apply an adequate weight of fire accurately onto the enemy. More particularly the division's guns were initially only supplied with shrapnel shells and while they were quick-firing their relatively flat trajectory would prove a distinct disadvantage on the rugged Peninsula. In fact the absence from the division's arsenal of any howitzers or mortars to provide high angle fire meant that the division could not provide sufficient fire to even neutralise, much less destroy, the well dug-in Turks. It was this factor more than any other that contributed to the stalemate that marked its first campaign.

Flowing from the early reverses on Gallipoli and the Western Front grew new organisations armed with an array of more lethal weapons including howitzer batteries, trench mortar brigades and medium machine-gun companies. Following its withdrawal from the Peninsula the old 1st Division was overhauled and reconstituted and in its place was left a more capable, complex and lethal organisation. For the next two-and-a-half years this organisation continued to evolve as battlefield experience fed a continuous loop of organisational experimentation and doctrinal development. As part of the BEF, the 1st Division faced competing trends to centralise and decentralise tactical planning, to diffuse and concentrate scarce resources, and the compelling challenge to specialise or maintain a generalist workforce. In solving these incongruous challenges the 1st Division emerged as a truly modern force.

While the artillery and infantry faced revolutionary changes during the Great War there was a not a single organisation within the division that did not end the war manifestly different from the way it began. Perhaps the two that were most radically altered were its communications and logistics. The 1st Divisional Signal Company was raised as a small sub-unit dependant on fixed wire and telephone. By wars' end this sub-unit had tripled in size and divisional communications had been catapulted from wire to wireless. Similarly, the

ammunition columns supporting the division began the war operating as semi-independent sub-units hauling ammunition in horse-drawn wagons. By 1918 this organisation was employing a modern echelon system and powered by the internal combustion engine rather than the horse. These changes, the birth of combat net radio and gasoline-driven logistics, heralded a revolution as profound as any others that swept away the deadlock of the Western Front.

Although largely forgotten today, it was the BEF's administrative efforts that paved the way for battlefield success. Even during the war this success was rarely acknowledged by frontline troops and its full importance was only belatedly recognised as one ex-AIF officer wrote 15 years after the war:

> *The psychological effect of good administration is enormous. The effect of bad administration is equally great, but the results are not so fortunate. Bad administration is quickly noticed by our own troops, and causes lack of confidence and low morale, so that the troops are defeated before the battle commences.* [5]

For the most part the 1st Division's administration was both sound and efficient. Although there were some notable lapses, particularly early in the war on Gallipoli, these failures stand out because they are so unrepresentative of the efforts of the division's administrators. The contemporary evidence suggests that no 1st Division member starved, of its 15,000 fatalities just 0.05 percent were due to disease, and the division never had to refuse battle for the want of munitions. This is an extraordinary record by any standard. Not only did the administrative system arm, feed, water, clothe, move and pay the division's personnel but it sustained them through four years of war with only one serious incident of its soldiers refusing to fight and this was effectively limited to a single company. This astonishing achievement rested on the shoulders of men such as John Austin, John Gellibrand, Cecil Foott and Horace Viney, who worked quietly in the background fighting to sustain the division. But while sound administration made industrialised war possible, it did not make it easy.

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[5] Maj Gen JM Durrant, 'Army Administration for War', lecture presented in November 1933, AWM: Durrant papers, PR88/009, folder 6.

When the 1st Division was raised its approach to war was rooted in pre-war British doctrine and peacetime training practices. As its units formed, they implemented a truncated version of the old regular army's training system. This training, commenced in the six weeks before embarkation, provided only the most rudimentary of basic training. On board the transports efforts were made to keep the soldiers busy and fit but limitations of space and inadequate facilities made this difficult. It was only when the division concentrated in Egypt that it got down to serious training. This period, leading up to the Gallipoli campaign was focussed on collective training as Bridges and his staff tried to weld their raw division into a cohesive formation. After departing Egypt, the short stay on Lemnos saw further training in the intricacies of cooperation with the navy as the troops had a few days to practice embarking and disembarking. Even after the Gallipoli landings training became a secondary task as the division struggled to prepare inadequately trained reinforcements. On the Western Front training became a regular feature of unit life. Initially the soldiers were introduced to the novelties of their new war and each time the division's units were withdrawn from the line they commenced a period of training. In 1916 training was less refined as lessons were learned or relearned, from early 1917 it became more systematic as multi-level schools were established and new doctrine introduced, and by 1918 it was paving the way to the victory.

Organisation, administration and training were the foundations of the 1st Division's success. Over four years the division matured as a formation, first on Gallipoli's stony shores and then in the mud and green fields of France and Belgium Flanders. From the time the 1st Division stormed ashore on Gallipoli, and despite a perilously shaky start, it established a reputation for hard fighting, endurance and courage. At Krithia it added to a growing reputation but more importantly at Lone Pine and during the withdrawal its commander and staff also learned and earned a reputation for sound, occasionally brilliant, staff work.

The 1st Division served over two-and-a-half years on the Western Front where its service fell into a regular campaign rhythm. The summer months, from its arrival in 1916 through until late 1918 were invariably occupied with major offensives. In 1916 it was the Somme, in 1917 it was Bullecourt and Third Ypres, and in 1918 it was Amiens and the 100-day campaign. These offensives

usually petered out in the winter as rain, casualties and exhaustion forced the BEF to call a halt. Winter was spent holding the line while as many of its personnel as could be spared were sent on leave or to attend special schools disseminating the new doctrine derived from the lessons of the year's fighting. Spring brought about the start of a new campaign season and the grim metronome of operations on the Western Front began again.

The 1st Division's first great test on the Western Front was Pozières. According to Thomas Glasgow: 'If the landing at Anzac is the first page of the story of how Australia won their place as a full-blown nation, the second page is the story of the capture of Pozières'.[6] Traditionally the success of the 1st Division at Pozières is attributed to the digger's fighting qualities; in reality it was more due to the quality of the divisional planning, staff work and artillery support. There is no doubt that the junior commanders and soldiers did well but they were only able to do so because the plan was a good one, the staff work ensured that they were placed at the right place and at the right time, and they were given all the support they needed to fight their battle.

The year 1917 was the tipping point for the 1st Division. The accumulation of hard-won experience, the rise of a new generation of combat leaders, the maturation of the BEF's administrative machinery, the promulgation of new defensive and offensive doctrine, and the opportunity to practice these all combined to transform the division. Many of these elements were seemingly small in themselves, in combination however, they changed the way the 1st Division fought the two last years of the war.

In March 1917 the division was placed in an exposed position at Lagnicourt, employing newly developed defensive doctrine. Even though outnumbered by four-to-one at the point of attack it was able to repel a strong German attack and inflict heavier casualties on the enemy than it suffered. Later in the year the division took its place in the line during the Third Battle of Ypres. Both at Menin Road and at Broodseinde the division fought in large-scale, choreographed,

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[6] Maj Gen Sir Thomas Glasgow quoted in Peter Burness, 'Hell on earth: 90th anniversary—the Somme, 1916', *The Canberra Times*, Anzac Day 2006 Special Edition, 25 April 2006, p 2.

limited-objective attacks. Thoroughly prepared and massively supported, especially by artillery, these single-day hammer blows crushed the German defenders and left their enemy grasping for a solution. Only the weather prevented a major victory as the campaign floundered to a halt in the Flanders mud.

Before the BEF could resume its offensive in 1918 the Germans struck their own blow in the spring, a last desperate bid to stave off defeat. In April the 1st Division was rushed to defend the vital hub of Hazebrouck. Over the next three months, as the division stood on the defensive, it helped turn the campaign around. Without the need for a major offensive, commanders employing the low-level tactics of ‘peaceful penetration’ pushed their line forward, inflicting heavy casualties on their opponents, and grinding down nine divisions sent to oppose them. In August the division returned to the Somme.

The 1st Division returned to the Somme on the eve of the great Amiens counterattack. Although too late to join the 8 August attack the division was thrown into the follow-on operations aimed at Lihons. Over three days, with very little time to prepare, the division crashed forward each morning, sometimes supported by tanks and sometimes behind a barrage, although just as often its infantry fought forward on their own. In some respects these operations saw the division turn full circle, fighting the type of open warfare it had trained for in the desert before Gallipoli; but Lihons was no ill-conceived fiasco like Krithia because in 1918 the 1st Division was a fundamentally different formation to its raw predecessor. Although the infantry moved in artillery formation and they closed with the enemy using fire and movement, and even if they were occasionally supported by field guns firing over open sights rather than from behind cover, these similarities are deceptively superficial. By 1918 nearly every facet of the 1st Division—its organisation, weapons, training, administration and most of its personnel—had changed. No longer a collection of disparate units, in 1918 the 1st Division was a smaller, more potent combined-arms team, led at

every level by men of judgement—judgement based on bloody experience and hard training and this had taught them what was possible and what was not.[7]

The experience of the 1st Division demonstrates that for all of the hyperbole about faceless, industrialised warfare, the human dimension still counted. Some 80,000 men passed through its ranks during the Great War and good men made good divisions. The 1st Division was particularly fortunate in its succession of GOCs. William Throsby Bridges, for all of his personal faults, was an ideal organiser and probably the best choice to raise the 1st Division. When Bridges fell to a sniper's bullet Birdwood's choice of replacement was inspired. Harold Walker was not unique among British regular officers although he was a rare commodity and his background, training and personality made him an ideal choice to lead Australia's premier division. On Gallipoli he demonstrated both tactical skill and moral courage—moral courage to the point of insubordination when he assessed his troops were being asked to sacrifice themselves in operations that had little chance of success. While Walker's protests could not always prevent the 1st Division having to undertake risky and difficult missions, he usually ensured that the division was given sufficient time plan properly and the resources to improve the odds. His refusal to be bullied and rushed reflects well on his professional judgment and force of character—two characteristics which endeared him to his staff and troops. When Walker was wounded on the Peninsula command eventually fell to Harry Chauvel and it was he who spirited the division away from the Peninsula in a model, almost flawless operation. Back in Egypt, Walker resumed command and took the division to France. It was to be a generally happy and successful union and not until Walker returned to British service in 1918, after three years at the division's head, did command of the 1st Divvy return to an Australian. Bill Glasgow, who rose from major to major general in four years, led the 1st Division during its last four months and its final climatic battles on the Western Front.

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[7] The operations of late 1918 were not dissimilar to those fought in the early days of World War Two. Some of the weapons had been upgraded but a 1st Division CO in 1918 would not have felt out of place at Bardia in 1940 and indeed some, such as John Mitchell, were there. James Wood, 'Mitchell, John Wesley (1891–1969)', *ADB*, Vol 15, p 382; and Pratten, *Australian Battalion Commanders in the Second World War*, pp 105–109.

The GOCs were clearly the most important individuals in making the division but they stood tall on other men's shoulders. In particular the GSO1 served as the crucial link between the commander, the staff and the rest of the division. It was the GSO1 who took the commander's intentions and plans, articulating and promulgating these as his orders and directives. It was Cyril Brudenell White's intellectual capacity that shaped the division, seeing it through until it was withdrawn from Gallipoli. In France Walker was teamed with Thomas Blamey and this odd couple became one of the great divisional command teams to emerge on the Western Front. When Walker was eventually replaced and Blamey promoted, Glasgow became GOC and was matched with the experienced and versatile Arthur Ross as his GSO1.

The supporting cast of the division was also truly exceptional. While some of the division's early leaders fell by the wayside those that survived and those that replaced them included talented senior commanders such as Ewan Sinclair-MacLagan, Joseph Talbot Hobbs, 'Cast Iron Jimmy' Heane, Henry Gordon Bennett, Walter 'Wacky' Coxen and Iven 'the Terrible' Mackay; along with COs of the calibre of 'Pompey' Elliott, Charles Elliott, Owen Howell-Price, Maurice Wilder-Neligan, John Mitchell, Bertie Stacy and Jeremy Taylor Marsh. It was these men who administered and trained the thousands of men who passed through the ranks of the division. Amid the thunder of the guns, the shrieking of the shells and the rocking earth, when every natural instinct told them to flee, these ordinary men heard the whistle blast, pulled themselves upright and despite the terror and shaking limbs marched towards the fire. It was they and the men who led them who made the 1st Division's reputation as one of the great fighting formations of the BEF and they achieved this amidst *the* Revolution in Military Affairs of the last century.

When the Australian Army next went to war it would and be organised, trained and fight in much the same way as the 1st Division in the latter part of the Great War. In January 1941 the 6th Australian Division, commanded by Iven Mackay (ex-GOC 1st Infantry Brigade AIF), attacked and captured the Italian fortress of Bardia—the Australian Army's first significant battlefield success of World War II and other than the desert setting it was an attack not dissimilar to those conducted by the 1st Division in 1918. In June 1941 the 7th Australian Division,

commanded by John Lavarack (ex-GSO1 1st Division), successfully invaded French Syria in a two-prong operation, which led to the surrender of the Vichy French forces in the Middle East. Between April and August 1941 the 9th Australian Division held the Erwin Rommel's German and Italian forces at bay defending the fortress of Tobruk. Its commander, Leslie Morshead (ex-2nd Battalion AIF) did this in a manner reminiscent of the 1st Division's 'peaceful penetration' campaign at Hazebrouck.[8]

This study has explored the history of just one infantry division during the Great War. It has analysed its story by focussing on what it did on and off the battlefield and charting its development as a wartime organisation. It has shown that the division's anatomy was complex, multi-faceted and constantly evolving. It has also demonstrated, at least in the experience of the 1st Australian Division, that before a large military organisation is fit to place its collective feet on the battlefield it has to find the right organisational 'fit'; it has to master the intricacies of administration; it has to train its officers and men, individually and collectively in the latest and most effective tactics; and only then can it be committed to battle with any hope of success. But hope is not a plan and a military organisation that is successful on the battlefield takes time, preparation and nurturing. Outcomes in war can rarely be attributed to a signal cause. Even on the Western Front there was no magic formula to be uncovered, be it guns to yards of trench or numbers of machine-guns per unit. War was and remains too complex and cannot be reduced to simple calculations that do not account for the unquantifiable human factor. Even in wartime when the cost of learning is paid in blood, it takes years to mature an organisation and its leaders. It was a lesson that the heirs to the 1st Division took with them into the next great war and so perhaps the past may not be such a foreign country.

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[8] Long, *To Benghazi*, pp 163–206; Stockings, *Bardia*, pp 288–402; DM Horner, 'Lavarack, Sir John Dudley (1885–1957)', *ADB*, Vol 15, pp 61–63; Gavin Long, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945. Series 1 (Army): Greece, Crete and Syria*, Vol II, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1953, pp 333–514; AJ Hill, 'Morshead, Sir Leslie James (1888–1959)', *ADB*, Vol 15, pp 423–425; and Barton Maughan, *Australia in the War of 1939–1945. Series 1 (Army): Tobruk and El Alamein*, Vol III, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1966, pp 11–12 and 237–238.

DIVISIONAL ACTIVITIES

The thesis is based on an analysis of the daily activities of the 1st Australian Division during its service during the Great War. The activity categories were derived from an analysis of British Edwardian doctrine, the entries divisional war diaries, and the types of activities common to all military formations at that time. These activities are listed below.

The decision to use a day (24 hours) as the measure for divisional activities was taken to focus at an appropriate level and because war diaries generally use a daily entry system.[1] On the other hand on any given day a formation or unit might conduct a number of activities. For example an infantry brigade committed to an attack may have rested for six hours (one quarter of the day classified as 'Administration-Personnel-Rest, Recreation and Welfare); following which it received orders and conducted rehearsals for six hours (another quarter of the day classified as 'Operations-General-Battle Procedure); then it conducted a six-hour approach march (classified as 'Administration-Movement-March'); and finally it attacked (classified as 'Operations-Offensive-Attack'). Attempting to apportion activities in this way, that is by part day, would have been impracticable.

In some instances the decision on what activity to attribute to a day was based on the amount of time taken for the particular activity. In other cases it was not the most time consuming activity, rather it was the dominant activity conducted in the period. Hence in the example above, the activities leading up to the attack were subordinate to the attack itself and so that day was classified as

[1] War diary entries were nearly always made daily, showing the date, location of the HQ or unit and what they were engaged in during that 24-hour period. The level of detail in describing the activity varies considerably depending on the individual making the entry (which was dependant on their level of training and experience in staff duties); the period of the war (entries were often more comprehensive in later years as staff experience improved); and the nature of the activity. If there was a major action, the entry sometimes is reduced to a detailed narrative or it may simply refer to a more detailed post-battle report attached as one of the appendices. On HQ 1st Division it appears to have been the practice for the GSO3 to compile the General Staff diary for approval by the GSO1, while the A&Q Staff diary was compiled by the respective staffs for approval by the AAQMG. Given the difficulties and time pressures these diaries were remarkably well kept.

‘Operations-Offensive-Attack’ because that was the most important activity in the 24-hour period and the focus of all efforts.

In other cases there was clearly a choice to be made between two dominant activities. For example during the voyage from Australia to Egypt it is recorded that all units continued to conduct training while at sea. This time could have been apportioned as ‘Training-Individual-Initial’ however, a review of the type of training and the limited time and facilities available led to the conclusion that this training was of minimal value, hence the sailing time for the division was classified as ‘Administration-Movement-Ship’.

In a few cases the war diaries provided insufficient detail to make a judgement. This occurred most commonly early in the war or during periods of high activity. Early in the war the staff was still learning on-the-job and often included insufficient or irrelevant detail that does not help in determining what the key activity was in a given 24-hour period. At times of high activity the small staff were often overwhelmed and too busy to complete detailed entries and these were either reconstructed after the event or detail is absent. In these cases the assessment was based on preceding and following activities, what other organisations similarly employed did, or if no obvious evidence was available it came down to ‘inherent military probability’. Ultimately a judgement had to be made and a consistent approach should have limited any distortion or bias. The following is a complete list of the divisional activities used in this thesis.

Category	Type	Activity
Administration	**Personnel Administration**	**Induction**—recruiting, induction of recruits and the absorption of reinforcements.
		Medical—inoculations, medical and dental checks and treatment, and hygiene and sanitary activities including baths.
		Duties—routine garrison and camp duties, loading/unloading stores, and fatigues.

Category	Type	Activity
		Rest, Recreation and Welfare—leave, rest, sports, entertainment, and philanthropic and religious services.
		Inspections—mobilisation, personnel and kit inspections.
		Ceremonial—parades, and honours and awards ceremonies.
		Discipline—legal, policing, discipline and punishment activities.
		Mortuary—burials, memorial services, and casualty collecting activities.
	Administrative Movement	**March**—administrative move by marching.
		Horse—administrative move on horseback or by horse-drawn vehicle.
		Motor—administrative move by motor vehicle.
		Rail—administrative move by tram, light rail and train.
		Ship—administrative move by sea.
	Logistics	**Supply**—supply and receipt of ammunition, clothing, rations, water, canteen stores and mail.
		Ordnance—issue, replacement, maintenance and return of weapons and equipment.
		Veterinary—issue, replacement and care of animals.
		Engineering—logistic construction and de-construction.
		Quartering—preparation, occupation, cleaning and maintenance of camps and billets.
Operations	**General**	**Organisation**—mobilisation, formation,

Category	Type	Activity
	Operations	expansion, reorganisation, reduction and disbandment of divisional organisations.
		Labouring—general labouring tasks and fatigues including salvage, cable laying and trench construction and repair.
		Battle Procedure—immediate preparations relating to battle including orders, administration and rehearsals.
	Support Operations	**Internal Combat Support**—combat support to organisations within the division.
		External Combat Support—combat support to non-divisional organisations.
		Internal Service Support—service support to organisations within the division.
		External Service Support—service support to non-divisional organisations.
	Offensive Operations	**Attack**—direct assault on an enemy force.
		Advance—advance to contact or advance in contact.
		Amphibious Assault—landing from the sea against a defended shore.
		Minor Offensive Operations—small-scale operations including feints, demonstration and raids.
	Defensive Operations	**Counter-Attack**—spontaneous or planned assault to recapture a position.
		Defence—occupying a front-line, support or reserve defensive position.
		Relief in Place—replacement of an organisation holding a defensive position.
		Withdrawal—disengagement either in or out of contact with the enemy.

Category	Type	Activity
Training	**Individual Training**	**Initial**—unspecified induction or basic training and lectures.
		Drill—foot, mounted, and weapons drill.
		Weapon—individual weapon training including musketry, bayonet, grenade and gas.
		Physical—callisthenics, physical conditioning and endurance marching.
		Specialist—individual combat and service support specialist training.
		Education—non-military education and vocational training.
	Collective Training	**Tactical**—unspecified, miscellaneous or mixed low-level collective training.
		Drill—sub-unit or unit foot, mounted and weapons drill.
		Field-Firing—small group, sub-unit and unit tactical live-fire training.
		Route-Marching—sub-unit, unit and formation route marches.
		Specialist—small group, sub-unit, and unit combat and service support specialist training.
		Team—low-level team tactical training including competitions.
		Platoon—platoon or half company collective training.
		Sub-unit—company, battery or squadron collective training.
		Unit—mounted regiment, artillery brigade, infantry battalion or service support unit collective training, rehearsals and demonstrations.
		Formation—infantry brigade or divisional

Category	Type	Activity
		artillery collective training, rehearsals and demonstrations.
		Divisional—divisional collective training, rehearsals and demonstrations.
	Combined Training	**Combined-Arms**—combined cavalry, light horse, tank, artillery, engineer, machinegun, gas and/or infantry training.
		Joint—air-ground and/or army-maritime training.
		Combined Forces—inter-army training.

1ST AUSTRALIAN DIVISION ACTIVITY SUMMARY

Activity Type Data

Category	Days	Type	Days	Activity	Days
Administration	423	Personnel Administration	188	Induction	0
				Medical	1
				Duties	20
				Rest, Recreation and Welfare	153
				Inspections	4
				Ceremonial	9
				Discipline	0
				Mortuary	1
				Total Personnel	188
		Administrative Movement	205	March	84
				Horse	0
				Motor	12
				Rail	43
				Ship	66
				Total Travelling	205
		Logistics	30	Supply	0
				Ordnance	13
				Veterinary	0
				Engineering	0
				Quartering	17
				Total Logistics	30
		Administration	423	Total Administration Days	423
Training	374	Individual Training	103	Initial	36
				Drill	3
				Weapon	25
				Physical	16
				Specialist	9
				Education	14
				Total Individual Training	103
		Collective Training	261	Tactical	129
				Drill	1
				Field Firing	1
				Route Marching	3
				Specialist	0
				Team	0
				Platoon	17
				Sub-unit	39
				Unit	20
				Formation	27
				Divisional	24
				Total Collective Training	261
		Combined Training	10	Combined-arms	2
				Joint	8
				Combined forces	0
				Total Combined Training	10
		Training	374	Total Training Days	374

Category	Days	Type	Days	Specific Activity	Days
Operations	886	General Operations	89	Organisation	45
				Labouring	3
				Battle Procedure	41
				Total General Operations	89
		Support Operations	18	Internal Combat Support	0
				External Combat Support	18
				Internal Service Support	0
				External Service Support	0
				Total Support Operations	18
		Offensive Operations	29	Attack	17
				Advance	6
				Amphibious	1
				Minor Operations	5
				Total Offensive Operations	29
		Defensive Operations	750	Counterattack	0
				Defence	660
				Relief-in-Place	81
				Withdrawal	9
				Total Defensive Operations	750
		Operations	886	Total Operations Days	886
Total Division Days	**1683**	**Total Activity Days**	**1683**	**Total Specific Activity Days**	**1683**

Location Data

Location	Days
Australia	68
At Sea	71
Egypt	207
Mediterranean	6
Gallipoli	239
Western Front	1092
Total Days	**1683**

Period Data

Activity Periods	Start	Finish	Total Days
Mobilisation 1914	15 August 1914	8 December 1914	116
Egypt 1915	9 December 1914	1 April 1915	114
Gallipoli 1915-16	2 April 1915	8 January 1916	282
Egypt 1916	9 January 1916	27 March 1916	79
Western Front 1916-18	28 March 1916	11 November 1918	959
Demobilisation 1918-19	12 November 1918	24 March 1919	133
Total Divisional Days			**1683**

Period Activity Data

Activity Category	Mobilise 1914	Egypt 1914–15	Gallipoli 1915	Egypt 1916	Western Front 1916-18	Demob 1918-19
Administration						
Personnel	9	18	11	10	87	53
Movement	45	0	21	10	104	25
Logistics	4	5	1	0	7	13
Total Administration	**58**	**23**	**33**	**20**	**198**	**91**
Operations						
General	26	2	6	0	34	21
Support	0	0	0	0	18	0
Offensive	0	0	5	0	24	0
Defensive	0	0	232	42	476	0
Total Operations	**26**	**2**	**243**	**42**	**552**	**21**
Training						
Individual	32	0	0	15	40	16
Collective	0	89	0	2	165	5
Combined	0	0	6	0	4	0
Total Training	**32**	**89**	**6**	**17**	**209**	**21**

Total for Period	**116**	**114**	**282**	**79**	**959**	**133**

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