



WINGS OVER GALLIPOLI

by Group Captain Keith Isaacs, RAAF,(Ret)

"The Gallipoli adventure has a unique place in the history of the war. For the first time a campaign was conducted by combined forces on, under, and over the sea. and on and over the land. Never again in the war were seaplanes compelled to work so much over the land, nor aeroplanes so much over the sea..."

H.A. Jones
The War in the Air - Vol II

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! Genesis of Combined Operations !
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The vicissitudes of the land and sea operations during the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) participation in the Dardanelles Campaign, 25 April - 19 December 1915, have been recorded, analysed, praised and/or criticised in great detail over the past 76 years. In contrast, the air actions in support of the Australians, New Zealanders. and other forces are rarely mentioned, and yet they laid the foundations for future land, sea and air joint operations. In fact. they established a watershed in the history of aerial warfare.

In addition to the ANZAC and Royal Australian Navy achievements at Gallipoli, it is not generally known that Australia also took part in the air war over the peninsula with the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) - albeit the sole representative was Captain A.H. Keith-Jopp, an Australian army gunner-cum-air observer. More importantly, but almost equally ignored, is the fact that Gallipoli was the first military campaign in which the Australian army co-operated with an air component to successfully enhance its operations.

Admittedly, Australian soldiers had gone into action, on occasions, during the Sudan War, March-May 1885, and the Boer War, 1899-1901. supported by observation balloons of the Royal Engineers. and elements of the Royal Navy.

These rare engagements, however, were far from the combined land, sea and air operations that developed during the 1914-18 War.

Then again, in December 1914 a Royal Aircraft Factory BE2a landplane, and a Maurice Farman S11 seaplane, of the Central Flying School, Point Cook, were shipped to German New Guinea aboard HMAS UNA, as part of the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force sent to capture the enemy territory. In the event, the task was completed so expeditiously, and decisively, that the aircraft were not required. They were returned from Rabaul to Point Cook in February 1915 still in their packing cases.

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 ! Prelude to ANZAC !
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Meanwhile, the British Government was deeply concerned about the part Turkey was taking in the war in support of Germany, with which it had signed a treaty on 2 August 1914. On 13 January 1915 the Admiralty was directed to "prepare for a naval expedition in February to bombard and take Gallipoli Peninsula, with Constantinople as its objective"

The Royal Naval bombardment began on 19 February with some 12 battleships, augmented by four French battleships. The British fleet also included the world's first true aircraft-carrier, HMS ARK ROYAL, named after the flagship of the British warships that sailed out on 20 July 1588 to challenge, and eventually defeat, the great Spanish Armada of 130 ships.

ARK ROYAL had been commissioned for service as a seaplane-carrier by Commander R.H. Clark-Hall on 9 December 1914, and arrived at the Greek island of Tenedos, in the Aegean Sea, on 17 February 1915. The aircraft aboard included three Sopwith 807 Folder Seaplanes, Nos 807, 808 and 922, two Wight Pusher Seaplanes, Nos 172-173, the Short Folder Seaplane, No 136, and four crated Sopwith Schneider seaplanes.

When it became obvious that the navy alone could not force the straits, plans were made to despatch a large army force from the Eastern Mediterranean, and Major-General Sir William Birdwood was sent to the Dardanelles to review the situation. In addition to his recommendations, Birdwood also wired Lord Kitchener on 4 March urgently requesting that a shipborne, man-lifting kite (as based on Lawrence Hargrave's early experiments), or a captive balloon, for spotting naval fire and detecting concealed enemy shore batteries, be sent to the Dardanelles.

Action was taken immediately, and the tramp steamer MANICA was hurriedly converted to accommodate a Drachen-type balloon for service afloat and, if required, ashore. HMS MANICA arrived on station at Mudros Harbour, on the Greek island of Lemnos, on 9 April.

In the interim, land-based aircraft of No 3 Squadron, RNAS, commanded by the indefatigable Wing Commander C.R. Samson, had arrived at Imbros Island, about 32.2 kilometres (20 miles) from the Dardanelles, on 23 March. The squadron's aircraft included Samson's favourites, the BE 2a No 50, and the Maurice Farman F27 No 1241, plus two Sopwith Tabloids, two BE2cs, and a French Breguet. In addition, two Maurice Farmans and eight Henry Farmans were shipped from Marseilles, but the latter aircraft were deemed unsuitable for operations.

Thus, with seaplanes, landplanes and a seaplane carrier and a balloon ship on station at the Dardanelles, the stage was set for the debut of air support on a scale never before achieved. History was about to be made.

For three weeks Samson and his dedicated fliers carried out many successful spotting, reconnaissance, photographic and bombing flights over the southern half of the peninsula. At the same time, ARK ROYAL and her brood of seaplanes covered the northern sector, mainly as a diversionary tactic to confuse the enemy. Vice-Admiral J.M. de Robeck, in charge of operations, declared "the RNAS has done excellent work of great value to our future operations". These future operations were, of course, the military assaults on the Gallipoli Peninsula on 25 April 1915.

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! Air Support at ANZAC !
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The dawn of that historic day - a day of annual remembrance in Australian history - saw General Birdwood's ANZAC force go ashore about 2.4 kilometres (1.5 miles) north of its intended landing area: this small beach was subsequently named Anzac Cove. The ANZAC landings were supported by MANICA's balloon and the seaplane from ARK ROYAL, while No 3 Squadron's landplanes assisted the British landings at Helles.

Ironically, the RNAS inadvertently imposed an element of bad luck upon the ANZAC assault. Two days before the landing, five aircraft had bombed Maidos so effectively that two Turkish reserve battalions, positioned in the town, were forced to transfer to a camp, much closer to the ANZAC landing area.

Consequently, these battalions were, fortuitously, in a position to attack the Australians even as they began to entrench. Casualties were high on both sides, but the ANZAC force held its position.

Meanwhile, the crew members of MANICA's balloon and ARK ROYAL's seaplanes were finding it difficult to locate, and report the Turkish positions among the forbidding and densely scrub-covered ravines, gullies and mountains facing the ANZAC advance.

The balloon, with its two observers, was in the air from 0521 to 1405 hours on 25 April, constantly reporting on the activities associated with Anzac Cove for almost nine hours, while the ANZAC troops were scrambling up the cliffs, one of the observers sighted the Turkish battleship TURGUD REIS (ex-German SMS WEISSENBURG) in the Narrows. HMS TRIUMPH was contacted by wireless, and its balloon-directed fire forced the Turkish warship to withdraw.

Soon after 0900 hours a similar engagement occurred, but this time the TURGUD REIS got under way and began to fire on the ANZAC transport ships, while the troops were still taking to the boats. Disembarkation was disrupted until the balloon-TRIUMPH combination again went into action. The TURGUD REIS then steamed out of range of TRIUMPH's four 254 millimetre (10 inch) guns, but returned in the afternoon to be chased away for the third time.

During the same period, ARK ROYAL's seaplane crews also had trouble locating the scrub-concealed Turkish batteries. Furthermore, the battery commanders added to the problem by holding back their fire whenever the seaplanes approached. The ever astute General Birdwood, however, subsequently turned this disadvantage to an advantage. He called for the seaplanes to patrol the lines when ANZAC troop movements were under way. The aircraft crews obliged, the quasi-cunning Turkish gunners kept their fire to a minimum, and the ANZAC troops breathed sighs of relief.

Early on 27 April TURGUD REIS began shelling ARK ROYAL off Gaba Tepe, forcing the seaplane-carrier to leave the ANZAC area, and steam out of range. The Short Folder Seaplane, No 136, was then launched from the carrier, and the crew directed TRIUMPH's fire onto the enemy battleship which, in turn, had to retreat. On the same day one of ARK ROYAL's Sopwith 807 Folder Seaplanes, operating from the light cruiser, HMS DORIS, searched for an enemy submarine off Gaba Tepe. It was an ominous sign.

In the interim, MANICA'S balloon made seven ascents on 26 April in support

of the ANZAC operations. The observers also spotted for TRIUMPH and HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH the Royal Navy's newest and most powerful battleship, and the first in the world to mount 381 millimetre (15 inch) guns - during the afternoon QUEEN ELIZABETH blew up an armament store at Kojadere.

On the 27th the balloon crew sighted Turkish transport ships near Najara, apparently heading for Maidos or Kilia Liman. QUEEN ELIZABETH was put on to the largest ship, the SCUTARI which was hit and sunk after three shots, at a range of 11.3 kilometres (7 miles).

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 ! Insatiable Demand for Air Co-operation !
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Admiral de Robeck was so impressed with the achievements of MANICA's balloon that he telegraphed for two more Drachen type balloons. As an interim measure, an old military spherical balloon, previously used in South Africa, was fitted to the tug HMS RESCUE. but the experiment was not a success.

Evidence of the high regard the British warships held for MANICA occurred when TRIUMPH reported that the balloon ship was being attacked by a submarine. Every ship in the area revealed its fierce protective spirit by immediately setting up a terrific barrage against the suspect - suffice to say, the "submarine", drifting innocently with the tide, was found to be an inverted tin bath.

The demand for MANICA's services was out of all proportion to that which a single ship could provide. Consequently a second balloon ship, HMS HECTOR, was hurriedly fitted out in a similar manner as MANICA, and arrived at the Dardanelles on 9 July. A third balloon ship, HMS CANNING reached Gallipoli on 2 October to replace MANICA which had sailed for England in mid-September to be refitted. CANNING was equipped with many improvements, including a large hold space enabling the balloon to be stored in the inflated condition.

The aircraft from the ARK ROYAL were also continually in demand, while operating from their parent ship lying off Gaba Tepe in the Anzac area. On 10 May however, the threat of submarine attacks forced the carrier into the shelter of Kephalo Bay at Imbros - the ship's top speed of only 10 knots made her particularly vulnerable to submarine attacks. ARK ROYAL became a depot

ship for all aircraft operating from Imbros, including her own seaplanes at nearby Aliko Bay; as time progressed these aircraft included the Short Folder Seaplanes, Nos 161 - 163 and 165 - 166. Ark Royal remained at Imbros until 1 November when she moved to Iero Bay, Mitylene, via Mudros, and finally left the Dardanelles for Salonika on 7 - 8 November 1915.

Meanwhile, the first German submarine U21, under Lieutenant-Commander Hersing, arrived in the Dardanelles in mid-May and disaster followed in its wake. Almost immediately U21 torpedoed the battleships TRIUMPH on the 25th, and HMS MAJESTIC two days later. Like its flying counterpart above the sea, the submarine under the sea was establishing a new set of rules for the conduct of future war operations.

In the interim, an aircraft of No 3 Squadron, RNAS, making a reconnaissance on 17 May, reported unusual activity in the port of Ak Bashi Liman, across the peninsula from Anzac Cove. Four Turkish transports, and other smaller craft, were observed unloading stores and troops near a large new camp, which was already occupied by many soldiers. These men comprised the Turkish Army's 2nd Division, which had moved forward from Constantinople.

Flight Lieutenant R.L.G. Marix, accompanied by Wing Commander Samson, flew his Breguet biplane back to the port in the afternoon and bombed the camp with one 45.36kg (100 lb) bomb, and 14 9.07 kg (20 lb) bombs. The dock hands fled in panic, and 57 soldiers were killed or wounded. As a result of the enemy build up, it was concluded that an early attack on the ANZAC position was imminent. and General Birdwood was informed accordingly.

The Turks attacked on the night 18-19 May, intent on driving out the ANZAC defenders. The RNAS reports, however, had robbed the assault of surprise, and the ANZAC troops held their ground. By 24 May so many Turkish soldiers had been killed during the five days of fierce fighting, that an armistice was granted to the enemy to bury the dead. The official historian of The War in the Air recorded that "there is, perhaps, no better example than is offered by the story of this action, of the far-reaching effect of a simple and timely piece of observation from the air".

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! Australia Takes To The Air !

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It was during May that the Australian army gunner, Captain A.H. Keith-Jopp, was attached to No 3 Squadron RNAS, as an air observer. In War in the Air

Volume II, H.A. Jones records his surname in a hyphenated format, and Jones' Predecessor, Sir Walter Raleigh, also refers to his brother, W.L.S. Keith-Jopp, in similar manner in Volume I. In contrast, the autobiographies of Air Commodore C.R. Samson and Vice-Admiral Richard Bell Davies name the Australian as Captain Jopp - although three of the four references in Davies book inadvertently refer to "Jupp", and the caption of a photograph in Samson's book bears the name "Topp" !

To add to the confusion, articles appeared in Popular Flying (edited by Captain W.E. Johns of Biggles fame), 1933-34 written by Stewart Keith Jopp "who has been flying since 1916 . . . in spite of the fact that he lost a hand in 1917, and an eye in 1918 . . ." Apparently, Keith-Jopp was the brother's surname on enlistment. but it would appear the use of the hyphen was subsequently deleted.

In the event, Samson first refers to his new observer in his book, Fights and Flights, as "Captain Jopp an Australian who was a great fellow, and usually came with me". By June Sampson revealed that "as well as Helles and the Fleet, we now had Anzac to look after; and we did a lot of artillery co-operation for the Australians, registering their heavy batteries on the Turks' guns. . . . Jopp was the observer whom I detailed to specialise on Anzac; he had an eye like a hawk, and wasn't long before he discovered most of the guns that were causing the trouble".

While Samson was commenting upon his Australian observer, an Australian soldier was doing likewise about Samson. On 19 May he wrote overseas to a friend that "we have the best English and French flyers here. One named Samson, the Germans have offered 6,000 pounds (for) dead or alive".

Davies' book, Sailor in the Air, also introduces Keith-Jopp about May 1915 - "After the landing we were joined by more military observers for pin-pointing batteries and for spotting. These were Captain Jopp, an Australian, Walser, Edwards and Knatchbull-Hugessen, all gunners. The latter was very young. He afterwards became Lord Brabourne and died as Governor of Bengal". Captain Keith-Jopp was in distinguished company.

In August, while operating from Imbros to cover the new landings at Suvla Bay, north of Anzac Cove, Squadron Commander Davies wrote "on the 6th a reconnaissance of the Anzac objectives was ordered. I took Jupp [sic] the Australian gunner . . .". The Suvla Bay assault occurred on 6-7 August and, although RNAS reconnaissance revealed that there was no serious enemy opposition for the next two days, no advance was initiated. The golden opportunity of surprise was lost, and another tragic stalemate developed on the

peninsula.

On 10 August Davies and Keith-Jopp were airborne in one of the newly arrived Henry Farman F27 biplanes when, as Davies records, "we met a German Etrich [sic] Taube over Anzac. The pilot did not see us, and I was able to come close behind him. Jupp [sic], who had a rifle, started shooting and must have made good practice, for at about the fifth shot I saw the pilot's face as he turned to look behind before going into a verticle dive. We heard afterwards that the Australians had full view of the encounter from the trenches. Convinced that we had shot down the German, they all started cheering.

The Taube (Dove) monoplane was designed by Austrian engineer Igo Etrich in 1910. As from 1911 some 500 single and two-seat improved versions of the Taube were produced under licence by various German aircraft manufacturers, but mainly by Rumpler. The Tauben used for reconnaissance at the Dardanelles were manned by German pilots and Turkish observers and, like their RNAS counterparts, were not initially equipped with machine guns. In fact, Wing Commander Samson's standing Orders for No 3 Squadron included the following extracts:

Pilots always to be armed with a revolver or pistol; to carry binoculars; some safety device, either waistcoat, patent life-belt, or petrol can.

Observers always carry rifle; proper charts for journey (in addition small scale chart of whole Peninsula); binoculars; life-saving device or petrol can; watch if not fitted to aeroplane.

In the interim, persistent demands for increased air support led to Colonel F.H. Sykes arriving in the Dardanelles on 24 June to confer with General Sir Ian Hamilton and Admiral de Robeck. Sykes submitted his report on 9 July, and on 24th he was appointed to command the RNAS units in the Eastern Mediterranean with the rank of wing commander.

On 12 June the fast 24 knot seaplane carrier, HMS BEN-MY-CHREE ("Woman of my heart" to the Manx people), a converted Isle of Man cross-channel packet-steamer, arrived at Iero Bay on the island of Lesbos. Although more than twice as fast as ARK ROYAL, BEN-MY-CHREE carried only half the number of aircraft. Her complement on arrival in the Aegean Sea comprised three Short Folder Seaplanes, Type 184/No841, Type 830s/Nos820 and 821, and two Sopwith Schneider seaplanes, Nos 1445 and 1560. Successive replacement

aircraft until December 1915 included the Short Folder Seaplanes, Nos 1561,3721 and 3722.

By 11 August Turkish transport ships were pouring reinforcements into Ak Bashi and Kilia Liman from Chanak on the Asiatic shore, for new assaults against the Suvla and ANZAC fronts. In a counter action to impede the transference of enemy troops across the straits, and to harass their movements down the peninsula, BEN-MY-CHREE's aircraft spotted for the monitor. HMS M16, while both ships were in the Gulf of Xeros - where a new technique of war was about to be introduced.

On 12 August, Flight Commander C.H.K. Edmonds, flying BEN-MY-CHREE's Short Folder Seaplane, No 842, equipped with a 254 millimetre (10 inch) Mark 14 torpedo, flew across the isthmus north of Gallipoli. Sighting a 5080 tonnes (5000 tons) steamer off Injeh Burnu he glided down, launched his torpedo, and hit the ship which settled down by the stern. This was the first successful aerial torpedo attack in history, notwithstanding that the target had been immobilised four days earlier by the British submarine, HMS E14. Clinching his claim to fame, however, Edmonds torpedoed another supply ship on 17 August, while again flying No 842.

During this second history making flight, Edmonds was accompanied by Flight Lieutenant G.B. Dacre in the torpedo-equipped Short Folder Seaplane No 184. This aircraft experienced engine trouble, and Dacre had to alight in the Narrows near a Turkish hospital ship, which he gallantly waved on to a safe passage. He then sighted a large tug, taxied towards it, and fired his torpedo which sank the boat in False bay. Dacre then became airborne after a take off run of 3.2 kilometres (2 miles), and flew back to BEN-MY-CHREE. These three episodes were the only aircraft torpedo attacks of the 1914-18 War, and they were the precursors of the Allied and Axis great torpedo-bomber victories of the 1939-45 War.

It is of interest to recall that Australian-born Squadron Commander A.M. Longmore (later Air Chief Marshall Sir Arthur Longmore, RAF, who died on 11 December 1970) made the world's first successful torpedo drop at Calshot on 28 July 1914 in the Short S.84 Folder Seaplane, No 121.

HMS BEN-MY-CHREE remained on station at the Dardanelles, supporting Anzac and British forces, until 20 December 1915 and 7 January 1916, respectively. On 2 September 1915 the seaplane-carrier played an important role in the ANZAC campaign, when it rescued 694 Australian and New Zealand troops of the 6th Brigade, AIF, after the troopship SS SOUTHLAND was

torpedoed by a submarine some 48.3 kilometres (30 miles) of Mudros; 121 crew members were also rescued.

Back in August 1915, the tempo of work became intense for Samson's No 3 Wing; In June the Admiralty had decreed that wings would replace squadrons, and the latter designation would be reserved for groups of six landplanes, or sea-planes. The aircraft crews were fully occupied spotting for ships firing at shore targets, co-operating with the troops at Anzac, Helles and Suvla, searching for submarines, and flying frequent anti-aircraft patrols to restrict the enemy's reconnaissance flights.

"August 19th was a black day", recalled Samson. He and Keith-Jopp were on patrol over the Suvla area in one of the two new Henry Farmans, when shrapnel put the engine out of service, and a forced landing was hurriedly carried out within the British lines. The enemy then relentlessly bombarded the aircraft and crew for about 10 minutes, although little damage was done. Leaving their aircraft to be repaired, Samson and Keith-Jopp returned to Imbros by the mail trawler, which had to battle heavy seas - "Jopp got sicker and sicker", related Samson, "until he turned from a six-foot Australian into a mere helpless invalid".

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! Air Arm Reinforcements !
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Towards the end of August a second RNAS land based flying unit arrived at Imbros under the command of Wing Commander E.L. Gerrard. This was No 2 Wing, which augmented Samson's No 3 Wing also at Imbros. No 2 Wing's aircraft comprised six Morane Parasols, six BE2cs, six Caudrons, and four Bristol Scouts. No 3 Wing also received new aircraft between June and August, including five Voisons, two improved Maurice Farmans, four Henry Farmans, and six Nieuport single-seat scouts.

In addition, three small SS (Sea Scout, or Submarine Scout) non-rigid airships arrived in mid-September. Colonel Sykes had originally proposed a force of eight Blimps, as they were sometimes known. In the event, only one was put into service, and the other two were never inflated. The operational SS survived several bombing attacks against its shed at Imbros until 21 October, when the SS Section was transferred to Mudros.

On 30 August Samson and Keith-Jopp excelled themselves. They were spotting for the monitor M15, which was positioned off Anzac Cove and firing at targets

in Ak Bashi Liman - a range of some 16459 metres (18,000) yards). "In Ak Bashi Liman were lying two steamers alongside each other, both 200 feet long, three or four tugs and about twenty dhows busily loading", reported Samson. "I got up to 6000 feet where I could get a good view both of M15 and Ak Bashi Liman. I took care to keep about four miles away from Ak Bashi in order not to arouse their suspicions. When ready I ordered fire. The first shot fell about 800 yards short, fortunately behind the hills so that no notice was taken by the Turks. The next shot fell into the sea. We now had the range".

"A terrible panic occurred" , continued Samson. "The tugs that had got dhows in tow cut them off and steamed for the Asiatic shore. The gangs on the beach who were now well used to aeroplane bombs, dropped everything and fled to the hills. I was trying to get a hit on the two steamers which were still at anchor. The eighth shot hit one. Jopp said, "What correction must I signal?" I said, "Report O.K." (hit). The ninth shell hit the second steamer. When it is remembered that these two ships were lying alongside each other, the range was 18,000 yards, that hills 800 to 1,000 feet were intervening, and that M15 was just lying with her bows up against a little mark buoy and rolling in the swell, this shooting is really wonderful . One steamer sank and the other got on fire . . .". As a result of this raid, big ships never came into Ak Bashi again in daylight hours.

The 18 September "was rather a red-letter day", recalled Samson. "General Birdwood came over to the aerodrome and said he would like a trip in the air. I took him up in a Maurice Farman, intending to do a local flight; but he told me to go over the Turks at Anzac. Off we went, and he made me go as far as Maidos, and fairly low down, so that he could see well. We got a proper reception from "Archie", and I felt very anxious carrying such a distinguished passenger. He was the only big noise that went up. I think it rather a pity that some more didn't".

As the Anzac Commander, Birdwood was admired by one and all, and the Commander of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, General Sir Ian Hamilton accorded him a special tribute in the following dispatch - "Lieutenant-General Sir W.R. Birdwood has been the soul of Anzac. Not for a single day has he ever quitted his post. Cheery and full of human sympathy, he has spent many hours of each 24 hours inspiring the defenders of the front trenches, and if he does not know every soldier in his force, at least every soldier in the force believes he his known to his chief."

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 ! The Battle Intensifies !
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Samson also recalled that on 10 November, "I despatched Thomson (Flight Lieutenant G.L. Thomson) with Jopp as his observer to see what they could do to the large camp I had located at Kara Bunar; right thoroughly they stirred things up with two 112-lb and four 20-lb bombs. As they approached, the Turks began to stream out of their tents; but some were too late. One 112-lb fell amongst the tents and demolished three of them, the second one fell amongst a large body of men running to seek shelter in a gulley. Jopp observed that the explosion killed a great many."

Keith-Jopp had a busy day on 1 December. He flew with a new pilot, Flight Sub-Lieutenant Vernon, to Ferejik junction where Squadron Commander R.B. Davies had won the Victoria Cross for landing his single-seat Nieuport scout and rescuing Flight Sub-Lieutenant G.F. Smylie, whose Henry Farman had been shot down by rifle fire on 19 November. Vernon's debut was most effective, as he hit the railway line with one of his bombs.

Later in the same day Keith-Jopp was flying with Flight Commander H.A. Busk and, as Samson recorded, they "had a good scrap with a German aeroplane . . . They were spotting for one of the monitors doing a bombardment when they sighted the German. They got close to him and opened fire before the German saw them. Jopp said that the German observer looked round and saw them right on his tail. He flung his arms round the pilot's head, shoved the stick forward, and the German dived nearly vertically. Busk followed down, but the German could dive quicker than the Henri Farman. They got the German right down to 20 feet or so off the ground, and chivvied him at that height, firing all the time until they got to Galata aerodrome. They failed to score a bulls eye unfortunately . . .".

Some days later one of Samson's pilots accidentally dropped a 45.36 kilogram (100 pound) bomb in a foremost Turkish trench about 18.29 metres (20 yards) from the ANZAC lines. On return to base he despondently reported to Samson that he thought he must have killed some Australians. That is until a signal arrived requesting more of the same. "One of your aeroplanes bombed Turk's trench; bits of Turk seen in the air, remainder of occupants got on to parapet, where we killed a lot with machine-guns; please repeat bombing". The pilot was elated, Samson kept mum about the fluke, but quietly admitted that "No 3 lived on this reputation for accuracy for a long time."

On 18 December, Samson took off from Imbros with a 226.8 kilogram (500 pound) bomb fitted to his Henry Farman. "This was by far the biggest bomb that up to that date had been dropped by an aeroplane in the War" , wrote Samson. "The Henri took it up like a bird, much to my delight. I searched around for over half an hour between Anzac and Kilia Liman looking for a suitable target . . ." He eventually dropped the bomb on a large building and scored a direct hit which entirely demolished the occupied quarters.

On 7 December the British Government decided to withdraw from Anzac Cove and Suvla, and by dawn on the 20th the evacuation was successfully completed. During the preceding week, the RNAS aircraft of Nos 2 and 3 Wings constantly patrolled the two beaches to prevent enemy aircraft flying over the areas; a similar procedure occurred when the Helles area was evacuated by 9 January 1916. On 11-12 January the RNAS lost its first two aircraft, and the four crew members, by enemy air attacks. These attacks coincided with the arrival of three Fokker Eindeckers (monoplanes), the first enemy single-seat fighters with a synchronised machine-gun firing through propeller arc.

In summary Samson observed that the "aeroplane pilots belonging to No 3 were not overburdened with decorations for the Campaign, nor were the five observers Edwards, Hogg, Jopp, Knatchbull-Hugessen and Walser, who were unrewarded. I don't know how many hours they each did . . . they got all the kicks and none of the plums . In contrast, the three Royal Navy midshipmen observers, St Aubyn, Sissmore and Chappell, were each awarded a DSC.

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 ! ANZAC Aftermath !
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When the ANZAC troops first arrived at the Dardanelles, the aeroplane was something of an oddity. As early as 1910 The Chief of the Imperial Staff, General Sir William Nicholson, declared in England that the aeroplane was "a useless and expensive fad, advocated by a few individuals whose ideas were unworthy of attention". In France, General Foch updated this statement during 1914 by adding that "the aircraft is all very well for sport - for the army it is useless".

In the event, campaigns such as Gallipoli soon changed these assessments. For eight months after their arrival , the Australians had front row seats at the rapidly unfolding drama of air power development. Before their eyes passed a panorama of landplanes, seaplanes, seaplane-carriers, aircraft-equipped

warships, balloon ships, non-rigid airships, and torpedo-equipped seaplanes. They were witnessing the forging of a new weapon of war, in which one of their own officers was participating.

Included among the ANZAC soldiers at Gallipoli who were inspired by the new air weapons - and, particularly, its potential for peace time application - were two young men destined to become famous aviators: Captain Sir Ross Smith KBE, MC and bar, DFC and two bars, AFC (1892-1922) and Air Commodore Sir Charles Kingsford Smith, MC, AFC (1897-1935).

Private Ross Macpherson Smith joined the Australian Light Horse in August 1914, and arrived at the Dardanelles from Egypt in May 1915 and a non-commissioned officer in the infantry. When he left Gallipoli on 12 September as a newly commissioned 2nd-Lieutenant, he had already made up his mind to try to transfer to the air arm. In October 1916 he joined No 1 Squadron, Australian Flying Corps, first as an observer, then as a pilot. His flying war record was brilliant, as affirmed by the array of outstanding decorations he received. Postwar, his first flight from England to Australia with his crew in the Vickers Vimy, G-EAOU, 12 November - 10 December 1919, ensured his fame in aviation history.

Charles Edward Kingsford Smith joined the Australian Imperial Force in February 1915, and arrived at Gallipoli as a corporal in late September. "When we were landing about 2am" he wrote to his mother on 6 October, "a Taube aeroplane spotted us and dropped some bombs, but they were wide, thank goodness. I felt mighty uncomfortable while the brute was overhead. We see so many planes now they don't matter to us. Anyway, most are British". In another letter during November he stated "we have much of the best gunners on our side. The Turks fire dozens of shells at our planes and seldom go near them, whilst our chaps only put two or three at those Taubes, and everyone of them looked as if it would bring them down".

Smithy, as he became known, transferred to the Royal Flying Corps as a lieutenant in 1917, and in June was posted to No 23 Squadron, equipped with Spad VII single-seat scouts. He was awarded the Military Cross, and finished the latter months of the war in 1918 as a flying instructor. His postwar flying achievements, particularly from 1928 to 1935 put him at the pinnacle of aviation greatness.

There were other Gallipoli soldiers who gazed skywards and dreamt of the future - not to mention 15 years old Charles Jackson who joined the AIF three years below the minimum recruiting age. He served at Gallipoli, was wounded,

repatriated to Australia, and discharged as a minor. He then re-enlisted and served with the 45th Battalion, 1916-18, under his real name, Charles Thomas Phillippe Ulm (1898-1934) - of Smithy and Ulm fame.

In addition to the Gallipoli veterans, Ross Smith, Charles Kingsford Smith, and Charles Ulm, it is poignant to recall that Geoffrey Lewis Hargrave, only son of "Australia's Father of Aviation", Lawrence Hargrave, was killed at Gallipoli on 4 May 1915, at the age of 23. Lawrence Hargrave was grief stricken, became seriously ill, and died in hospital on 6 July 1915. It has been said, he was killed by the same bullet that took his son's life.

Geoffrey Hargrave was but one of the estimated 8709 killed, and 19,000 wounded Australians at Gallipoli. In proportion to Australia's contemporary population of less than five million, this was the most terrible introduction to war by any country in history. In hindsight, so much could have been done at Gallipoli to turn defeat into victory, but the campaign was a continuing saga of poor leadership and missed opportunities.

From such disasters, however, there sometimes comes a ray of hope. In this instance, the Australians at Gallipoli witnessed the genesis of a new arm of warfare that, within three decades, became a great weapon of deterrence against world wars. Perhaps, after all, Orville Wright's prediction might yet come true - "When my brother and I built and flew the first man-carrying flying machine, we thought we were introducing into the world an invention which would make future wars practically impossible".

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Note: "The spelling, Henri Farman, was used by air men in the field, whereas the aircraft was taken on charge under the official title of Henry Farman".

