

# ‘All Pretty Well Fed Up and Worn Out’? Morale, Combat Motivation, and the ‘Marshall Effect’ in VIII Corps at Gallipoli

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## ABSTRACT

*This article explores the morale of the troops of British VIII Corps on Gallipoli in 1915-16, using Anthony King's recent work on combat motivation in infantry platoons as a tool of analysis. King, partially rehabilitating the controversial work of S.L.A. Marshall, argues that left to themselves, the citizen armies of the early twentieth century tended to passivity. Officers resorted to a range of strategies to overcome this 'Marshall Effect', including appeals to patriotism and masculinity, mass tactics, and heroic leadership. It is contended that King's model works well when applied to this case study – such methods were indeed employed by officers of VIII Corps - but the jury is out on its wider applicability, pending detailed case studies of other campaigns. As this article demonstrates, the morale of the troops of VIII Corps was severely tested throughout the Gallipoli campaign, as a rash of short-lived 'panics' demonstrated. There was a distinct downturn in August 1915, which was marked by an increase in rates of sickness and self-inflicted wounds, and a 'strike', when a sub-unit simply refused to carry out an attack. Despite this, there was no general and permanent breakdown of morale, in the sense of unwillingness to obey the orders of higher command. VIII Corps' morale was characterised by stoicism and resilience in the face of adverse conditions.*

## Introduction

The boys in our lot who were in Egypt and have been here since May are all pretty well fed up and worn out, which is only natural as they have been through it and do need a long rest.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lee to mother, 4 Sept. 1915, in Robert Lee, *Letters from Gallipoli* (Kibworth Beauchamp: Matador, 2015), p. 45.

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So wrote Private Bert Lee on 4 September 1915. Lee had arrived on Gallipoli as a reinforcement for 1/7 Manchesters, a Territorial battalion of 42<sup>nd</sup> (East Lancashire) Division. The Division had landed at Cape Helles in early May, after training in Egypt, and since then had been engaged in trench warfare, under small arms and shell fire, whether holding positions, or attacking, virtually without respite. This, plus a monotonous diet and endemic sickness, had reduced the 1/7 Manchesters to the state that Lee described. Similarly, a member of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Division Royal Engineers contrasted the appearance of yeomanry troops who arrived at Gallipoli in October 1915 'in the pink of condition', with 'our war-worn men, sick from every ailment imaginable'.<sup>2</sup>

This article explores the state of morale among troops of British VIII Corps at Gallipoli.<sup>3</sup> It makes use of Anthony King's recent work on combat motivation in infantry platoons.<sup>4</sup> King builds upon earlier attempts to explain combat performance. Seminal works privileged the primary group as the mainspring of combat motivation.<sup>5</sup> Essentially, it was argued that men fought because they did not want to let down other group members, and feared being seen as 'unmanly'. Indeed, interpersonal masculine bonds were seen as the centre of cohesion, and hence combat motivation. Alternatively, the role of ideology and punishment in combat performance has also been stressed; moreover, the goal of the cohesive group could be to avoid combat and thus enhance its chance of survival.<sup>6</sup>

In recent years, scholars have moved away from being concerned with what soldiers *feel* to what they collectively *do*. Hew Strachan has persuasively argued that 'when exhaustion makes rational thought impossible, or when fear has taken over' properly-trained 'individuals react without thinking'. It could even be argued that interpersonal relations are immaterial, providing that combat teams 'have trained together

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<sup>2</sup> 'Compiled by members of the Corps', *A History of the East Lancashire Royal Engineers* (Uckfield: Naval and Military Press, nd [1920]), p. 109.

<sup>3</sup> For the order of battle of VIII Corps, see Appendix.

<sup>4</sup> Anthony King, *The Combat Soldier*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 17-19, 38.

<sup>5</sup> King, *Combat Soldier*, pp. 13-15, 98-99; Edward A. Shils and Morris Janowitz, 'Cohesion and Disintegration in the Wehrmacht in World War II', *The Public Opinion Quarterly* (12, 2, 1948), pp. 280-315; S.A. Stouffer *et al*, *The American Soldier*, Vol. II, *Combat and its Aftermath* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1949); Roger Little, 'Buddy Relations and Combat Performance', in Morris Janowitz, *The New Military: Changing Patterns of Organization* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 1969 [1964]) pp. 195-223.

<sup>6</sup> Charles Moskos, *The American Enlisted Man: The Rank and File in Today's Military* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1970); Richard Holmes, *Firing Line* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1985) pp. 31, 317-18; Omer Bartov, *Hitler's Army* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

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sufficiently'.<sup>7</sup> Sweeping explanations of combat motivation, such as the primary group or ideology, are now less favoured than 'the specific social dynamics on the battlefield or within military units'. King is influenced by the sociologist Randall Collins, who argues that to commit violence is hard, not easy; to paraphrase him, habitual violence is a 'learned microtechnique'.<sup>8</sup> While not rejecting the significance of the primary group, appeals to masculinity, or ideology, King's work stresses the social dynamics of the platoon in creating cohesion.

Central to King's thesis is his rehabilitation of the work of S.L.A. Marshall. The latter's thesis, based on his study of US troops in Second World War, was that on the twentieth century 'empty battlefield' only around 1-in-4 of infantrymen fired their weapons. By contrast, crew-served weapons enjoyed the benefits of visible team work and could keep up high rates of fire.<sup>9</sup> Marshall's thesis and methodology have been attacked.<sup>10</sup> King partially accepts these criticisms but offers some evidence that supports Marshall's ideas, contending that in general, the mass armies of non-professional soldiers of 1914-18 and 1939-45 were too large to be trained effectively. Thus 'low levels' of combat effectiveness 'were... the norm in the citizen platoon' in Western armies of the period. Left to themselves, soldiers tended to passivity.<sup>11</sup> King, in part revisiting earlier theories of motivation, argues that this 'Marshall Effect' could be overcome in a variety of ways: appeals to masculinity and patriotism; ideological indoctrination; mass tactics, especially the bayonet charge; training soldiers for 'extreme aggression'; and relying on heroic, often self-sacrificing, individual leaders to motivate the rest.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Hew Strachan, 'Training, Morale, and Modern War', *Journal of Contemporary History* (41, 2, 2006), p. 217; Anthony King, 'On Cohesion', in Anthony King (ed.), *Frontline: Combat and Cohesion in the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 11.

<sup>8</sup> Randall Collins, 'The micro-sociology of violence', *British Journal of Sociology* (60, 3, 2009), p. 575. See also *idem*, *Violence: A Micro-sociological Theory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> S.L.A. Marshall, *Men Against Fire: The Problem of Battle Command in Future War* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1978 [1947]), pp. 41-42, 44, 50; King, *Combat Soldier*, pp. 42-61.

<sup>10</sup> Roger J. Spiller, 'S.L.A. Marshall and the Ratio of Fire', *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute*, 133, Dec. 1988, pp. 63-71; John Whiteclay Chambers II, 'S.L.A. Marshall's *Men Against Fire*: new evidence regarding fire ratios', *Parameters* 33 (Autumn 1993), pp. 113-21; Robert Engen, *Canadians Under Fire: Infantry Effectiveness in the Second World War* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), 19-22, 146-9.

<sup>11</sup> King, *Combat Soldier*, pp. 51-8, 60 (quote from p. 51). King's thesis is twenty-first century professional forces have largely overcome the problem through training.

<sup>12</sup> King, *Combat Soldier*, *passim*.

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VIII Corps at Gallipoli represents a good 'laboratory' in which to test King's ideas. This formation served in a discrete and geographically limited area (the Helles front at Gallipoli) from April 1915 to January 1916.<sup>13</sup> Most of its constituent units and formations were poorly-trained citizen soldiers without previous combat experience, led by inexperienced officers. The main exception was 29<sup>th</sup> Division, which consisted almost entirely of Regular battalions. However, heavy casualties soon reduced the quality of these units, and the replacements that reached Gallipoli were often wartime volunteers. The conditions at Helles severely tested soldiers' morale. The historical study of military morale and combat motivation is a dynamic field, to which scholars such as Jonathan Fennell, Jonathan Boff, Alexander Watson and Tarak Barkawi have recently made sophisticated and intellectually exciting contributions.<sup>14</sup> This article employs a simple but robust working definition of 'morale': it is a state of mind that determines the attitude of soldiers, individually and collectively, towards their situation, especially their willingness to obey orders and endure. 'Combat motivation' refers to a subset of more general morale, that is, willingness to engage in offensive action.<sup>15</sup> Clausewitz differentiated between 'mood' and 'spirit'. The former is transient and dependent on factors such as the weather; the latter concerns essential willingness to endure and to fight.<sup>16</sup> This article argues that for the most part, the spirit of British soldiers at Helles was, from the perspective of higher command, sound, although mood fluctuated according to circumstances.

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<sup>13</sup> Technically, VIII Corps was formed in June 1915 from formations that had landed at Helles from 25 April 1915 onwards.

<sup>14</sup>Jonathan Fennell, 'Re-evaluating Combat Cohesion: The British Second Army in The Northwest Europe Campaign of the Second World War', in Anthony King (ed.), *Frontline: Combat and Cohesion In The Twenty-First Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 134-66; Jonathan Boff, *Winning and Losing on the Western Front: The British Third Army and the Defeat of Germany in 1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), Alexander Watson, *Enduring the Great War: Combat, Morale and Collapse in the German and British Armies, 1914-1918* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Tarak Barkawi, *Soldiers of Empire: Indian and British Armies in World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

<sup>15</sup> These definitions represent a development of the arguments first made in G.D. Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches: Officer-Man Relations, Morale and Discipline in the British Army in the Era of the First World War* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000) pp. 180-1. Fennell's definition of morale is similar: Jonathan Fennell, *Fighting the People's War: The British and Commonwealth Armies and the Second World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 708.

<sup>16</sup> Carl von Clausewitz (edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret), *On War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 189.

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The basic factors that influenced British soldiers' morale in the Great War have been examined by the author elsewhere.<sup>17</sup> These factors, such as the importance of mail from home,<sup>18</sup> held true for Gallipoli, but a soldier's reminiscence of 'Those parched days when... we would have willingly given a week's pay for a cooling draught of "Bass" [beer]' hints at the particularly extreme conditions endured by men there.<sup>19</sup> Sleep was an unusually precious commodity, and given the medical effects of sleep deprivation, this would have made soldiers' morale especially fragile.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, there were also some very specific factors. Thus, in May 1915, the withdrawal of battleships from close support depressed soldiers' morale.<sup>21</sup>

For more than 50 years prior to the First World War, the Volunteer (from 1908, Territorial) drill hall had taken its place alongside the pub, chapel and sports team as a mainstay of local loyalties. The two Territorial Force (TF) divisions that served at Helles, 42<sup>nd</sup> (East Lancashire) and 52<sup>nd</sup> (Lowland), came from this tradition. Not all the men who went overseas with TF units had pre-war Territorial service, or were even local men.<sup>22</sup> However, there was substantial continuity between the peacetime TF units and those serving at Helles. Such connections undoubtedly enhanced unit cohesion, but the effect of heavy casualties on such close-knit units could be damaging to both military and civilian morale. Mike Horgan, who arrived on Gallipoli in August 1915 as a reinforcement for 1/7 Manchesters, found that 'a lot of my pals that I was looking for were already dead'.<sup>23</sup> In Galasheils, the news of the appalling losses suffered

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<sup>17</sup> Gary Sheffield, *Command and Morale: The British Army on the Western Front 1914-1918* (Barnsley: Praetorian Press, 2014) pp. 153-71.

<sup>18</sup> A.H. Mure, *This Bloody Place: With the Incomparable 29th* (Barnsley: Pen & Sword, 2015 [1919]), pp. 40-1.

<sup>19</sup> Border Regiment Archives, Cumbria's Museum of Military Life (BRA/CMML), 'S.W.E', 'Do You Remember? Some Recollections of Gallipoli, 1915', *Borders News Sheet*, I, (1 Apr. 1929), n.p. See also Gary Sheffield, 'Shaping British and Anzac Soldiers' Experience of Gallipoli: Environmental and Medical Factors, and the Development of Trench Warfare', in *British Journal of Military History (BJMH)* (4, 1, 2017).

<sup>20</sup> See below, and June J. Pilcher and Allen I. Huffcutt, 'Effects of Sleep Deprivation on Performance: A Meta-Analysis', in *Sleep*, (19, 4, Jun 1996)

<sup>21</sup> Diary, 24 May 1915, in John Gilliam, *Gallipoli Diary* (Stevenage: Strong Oak/Donovan, 1989 [1918]), p. 100.

<sup>22</sup> K.W. Mitchinson, *The Territorial Force at War, 1914-16* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014), pp. 6, 62. For the context of army recruitment in 1914-15, see Peter Simkins, *Kitchener's Armies: The Raising of the New Armies, 1914-16* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) and Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014 [2012]).

<sup>23</sup> Transcript of interview, in Sue Richardson (ed.), *The recollections of three Manchesters in the Great War* (privately published, 2006), pp. 32-33.

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by 1/4 King's Own Scottish Borderers (KOSB) on 12 July 1915 led to women 'openly weeping... "It is just like Flodden over again"'.<sup>24</sup> In modern memory, 1 July 1916, the First Day on the Somme, was the first occasion in which locally-raised battalions and their parent communities suffered huge losses. In reality, in the previous summer towns in Scotland and Lancashire were grieving over mass casualties.

### Casualties

Casualties at Gallipoli were extremely heavy. Losses in 86 Brigade during the landing were such that 1/Royal Dublin Fusiliers and 1/Royal Munster Fusiliers had to be temporarily amalgamated as the 'Dubsters'.<sup>25</sup> Costly offensives followed, but losses during periods of trench-holding were also high, as were sickness rates. 1/5 Manchesters first went into the trenches on 11 May. In three months, of the 832 men who landed on Gallipoli in May (including 35 officers) 582, about 70 per cent, had become battle casualties or were sick.<sup>26</sup> Loss rates were exacerbated by problems in sending reinforcements to Gallipoli, meaning that units were invariably understrength, sometimes severely so.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, the quality of some drafts caused concern: Major-General Paris (General Officer Commanding [GOC] Royal Naval Division [RND]) complained of being sent "War Babies".<sup>28</sup> Inevitably, heavy losses had an impact on combat effectiveness. After the fighting on 28 April Brigadier-General William Marshall (temporarily commanding 29<sup>th</sup> Division) signalled that 'both regiments and brigades are much mixed and thoroughly done'. The combination of strong Ottoman resistance, the breakdown of the advance, and doubtless the cumulative effect of the heavy losses incurred since 25 April meant that 29<sup>th</sup> Division was temporarily combat ineffective. Even in early June, the new GOC of 29<sup>th</sup> Division found it weak and in disarray.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, on 7 June Major-General Paris signalled that, after intense combat

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<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Gavin Richardson, *For King, Country and the Scottish Borderers* (privately published, 1987), p. 58; see also Ian S. Wood, "Be Strong and of a Good Courage": The Royal Scots' Territorial Battalions from 1908 to Gallipoli', in C.M.M. Macdonald and E.W. McFarland, (eds.), *Scotland and the Great War* (Edinburgh: Tuckwell, 1999), pp. 115-16.

<sup>25</sup> Public Records Office of Northern Ireland, Hume papers, Ms account of 86 Infantry Brigade, 30 April 1915.

<sup>26</sup> Liddell Hart Centre for Military Archives, King's College London [LHCMA/KCL], Darlington papers, 3 September 1915.

<sup>27</sup> The UK National Archives (TNA), CAB 19/33, Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Sclater, evidence to Dardanelles Commission, 1917.

<sup>28</sup> Imperial War Museum [IWM], DS/Misc/57 reel 1, Paris Papers, Paris to Christine, 25 August 1915. See also Brigadier-General D. Mercer diary, (in private hands), 20, 24 August 1915.

<sup>29</sup> TNA, WO 95/4304, War Diary [WD], 29<sup>th</sup> Division General Staff [GS], 28 Apr. 1915; LHCMA/KCL, Lieutenant-General Sir Beauvoir de Lisle papers, 'My narrative of the Great German War', p. 75.

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three days earlier, 'The [RND's] 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade are very exhausted. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade is not for the moment effective'.<sup>30</sup> Even successes were expensive. 42<sup>nd</sup> Division did well in its attack of 4 June, but on the 26<sup>th</sup> Lieutenant-General Sir Alymer Hunter-Weston (GOC VIII Corps) reported that '42<sup>nd</sup> Division with the exception of the 127<sup>th</sup> Manchester Brigade (now very weak) are not at present of any great fighting value'.<sup>31</sup>

### The Marshall Effect

There is some evidence from Helles that supports the notion of the Marshall Effect, in the sense of passivity of troops. In mid-May, a 'Special Order' was issued to 29<sup>th</sup> Division:

It must be a point of honour for all that each day there is some advance to record, some Turks killed, or some important point in their line captured, or rendered so dangerous that they will cease to make use of it.<sup>32</sup>

Clearly, higher command feared inaction, the context being the heavy casualties suffered since 25 April. Generals continued to be worried by passivity throughout the campaign.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, in September 1915, Hunter-Weston's successor, Lieutenant-General Sir F.J. 'Joey' Davies, wanted to reduce the number of men holding trenches, in line with Western Front practice. The commanders of 42<sup>nd</sup> and 52<sup>nd</sup> Territorial divisions opposed the plan, arguing that their ranks contained many 'young soldiers and that numbers were necessary to give them confidence'.<sup>34</sup> Clearly, these generals understood the 'empty battlefield' phenomenon.

Evidence of troops failing to fire their weapons is scarce, but one incident is suggestive. Brigadier-General D.G. Prendergast, (126 Brigade, 42<sup>nd</sup> Division) found two men in the trenches who did not 'know how to load their rifles. This is an extreme case no doubt, but [he found] men and officers I consider mere recruits, unfit for the firing line'.<sup>35</sup> Against this must be set evidence of 'funk fire', when raw, jumpy soldiers

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<sup>30</sup> TNA, WO 95/4290, WD, Royal Naval Division GS, Paris to HQ VIII Corps, 7 June 1915.

<sup>31</sup> C. F. Aspinall-Oglander, *Military Operations: Gallipoli*, Vol. II (London: Heinemann, 1932), p. 51; TNA, CAB 19/29, Lieutenant-Colonel A.E.F. Fawcus, evidence to Dardanelles Commission, 1917; TNA, WO 95/4273, GS VIII Corps, Hunter-Weston to Braithwaite, 26/6/15.

<sup>32</sup> TNA, WO 95/4304, WD, 29<sup>th</sup> Division GS, 15 May 1915.

<sup>33</sup> See e.g. TNA, WO 95/4273, WD, VIII Corps General Staff [GS], Minutes of Corps Commander's Conference 30 September 1915.

<sup>34</sup> TNA, WO 95/4273, VIII Corps General Staff [GS], Minutes of Corps Commander's Conference. 14 September 1915.

<sup>35</sup> TNA, CAB 19/30, Brigadier-General D.G. Prendergast, evidence to Dardanelles Commission, 1916.

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continually fired their rifles, especially at night. Here the problem was stopping men from wasting ammunition by blazing away at shadows. Experienced soldiers learned not to do this.<sup>36</sup>

One aspect of the Marshall Effect that certainly applied at Gallipoli was the role of individual leaders in overcoming passivity among troops. This is perhaps reflected in the high number of officer casualties relative to those of Other Ranks. Lieutenant-Colonel H.C. Darlington, commanding officer (CO) of 1/5 Manchesters, wrote in early June that 'Authorities' had ordered that COs were not allowed to lead their men into battle. COs 'should be in the rear of their commands where they can watch and influence events and keep in touch with their commands and with Brigade'. This managerial approach clashed with the instincts of many COs, including Darlington's. COs were often officers of a lower rank than lieutenant-colonel, temporarily holding the post because the original commander had become a casualty, and such men may have had difficulty restraining their desire to lead from the front.<sup>37</sup> Pace the stereotype of the chateau general, senior officers on occasion exercised battlefield leadership. Brigadier-General William Scott-Moncrieff, GOC 156 Brigade (52<sup>nd</sup> Division) was killed on 28 June in the 'front line where he had no business to be' while 'pushing forward' a 'sticky' battalion (1/7 Cameronians).<sup>38</sup> During First Krithia (28 April) the conduct of Brigadier-General Marshall, was described as 'magnificent[,] walking about the whole day under a heavy fire *pushing men on*'.<sup>39</sup>

However, regimental officers shouldered the main burden of battlefield leadership. An almost textbook example of the Marshall Effect occurred during Third Krithia (4 June 1915). The RND suffered appalling losses during their advance, with many officers being killed or wounded. Eventually, the 'whole line [was]... forced back to its original position with very heavy loss'.<sup>40</sup> Sub-Lieutenant F.S. Kelly (Hood Battalion), commanding a force in the British front line, was unaware of what had happened to the assaulting waves until 'there was rather an alarming rush back to our trench of

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<sup>36</sup> H. Maldwyn Davies, *A Flintshire Territorial at War 1914-18* (Worthenbury: Bridge Books, 2016) p. 47; KCL, Darlington Papers 18 July 1915; Royal Marines archives, 1975/b, John Allen, diary, 23 July 1915.

<sup>37</sup> LHCMA/KCL, Darlington Papers, letter, 18 July 1915.

<sup>38</sup> TNA, CAB45/249, Major-General G.G. Egerton diary, 28 June 1915; Frank Davies and Graham Maddocks, *Bloody Red Tabs: General Officer Casualties of the Great War* (London: Leo Cooper, 1995) p. 103; but see also R.R. Thompson, *The Fifty-Second (Lowland) Division 1914-1918* (Glasgow: Maclehose, Jackson & Co, 1923), pp. 60-61.

<sup>39</sup> Lucas to Mother, 29 Apr 1915,

<http://gallipolifirstandlast.blogspot.co.uk/?view=timeslide> (emphasis added), viewed 19 June 2019.

<sup>40</sup> TNA, WO 95/4290, WD, Royal Naval Division GS, Paris to HQ VIII Corps, 6 June 1915.

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panic-stricken Collingwood and Anson men'. He went out into No Man's Land to attempt to halt the rout: 'I turned a few of them about, but there were too many of them for me to cope with'. Kelly then spent 45 minutes 'going up and down the trench pushing them out again', ordering them to 'report themselves to any officer they found in front of the line'. About 30 men went 'over the parapet', but Kelly discovered that most of them were 'merely lying down a few yards from the trench. Kelly then led the men towards Ottoman trenches. Once he had 'got them moving', Kelly returned to his own men, but he was wounded. Later he heard that casualties among the officers of the assaulting battalions had been heavy, so that 'the men were leaderless and didn't know what to do'.<sup>41</sup>

This incident reveals a number of facets of the Marshall Effect. The initial attack broke down because of the intensity of enemy fire, which resulted in the loss of leaders. The brigade commander, Commodore Oliver Backhouse, subsequently reported that four key officers were killed 'early in the advance', and their loss seems to have had a disproportionate effect on the cohesion of the assaulting troops.<sup>42</sup> Deprived of leaders, panic set in amongst poorly-trained troops that lacked initiative, but the rout subsided once the men had reached the RND's trench. Eventually, Kelly's heroic and charismatic leadership did succeed in leading some men back towards the battle. This was not the only time when individual leadership compensated for lack of training, discipline and combat motivation.<sup>43</sup>

At the heart of King's work is the distinctive problem of combat performance and the citizen force. This was reflected in a comment by a wartime volunteer, Joe Murray (Hood Battalion, RND), on the Regular 2/Hampshires: 'Their advance under such terrible fire was an object lesson to we 'civilian' soldiers and the value of training was brought home to us during those glorious minutes'.<sup>44</sup> Such admiration of the professionalism of the Regulars among citizen-soldiers was not uncommon. A middle-class Territorial, Corporal Cyril Barnes (1/5 Manchesters), commented that 'The average soldier might be a rather coarse & vulgar chap, but when it comes to doing

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<sup>41</sup> Kelly, diary, 4 Jun 1915, in Jon Cooksey and Graham McKechnie (eds.), *The Lost Olympian of the Somme* (London: Blink, 2016 [2015]), p. 106. For context, see TNA, WO 95/4290, WD, RND GS, 4 June 1915.

<sup>42</sup> TNA, WO 95/4290, WD, RND GS, 'Report on the Operations of 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade', 5 June 1915; Douglas Jerrold, *The Royal Naval Division* (London: Hutchinson, 1927), p. 135.

<sup>43</sup> For an example, see Kelly, diary, 4 Jun 1915, in Cooksey and McKechnie, *Lost Olympian*, p. 121; Lister to Ribblesdale, 22 Jul. 1915, in Lord Ribblesdale, *Charles Lister* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1917), p. 211.

<sup>44</sup> Joseph Murray, diary, 2 May 1915, in *Gallipoli 1915* (London: New English Library, 1977 [1965]), p. 66.

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his duty he is a perfect 'brick'.<sup>45</sup> However, the discipline and training of even inexperienced citizen-volunteers could be effective. Coming under fire for the first time at Suvla Bay on 6 August 1915, a soldier noted that 'the discipline stood to us (sic) marvellously; we seemed to do the right thing at the right time mechanically, for you must remember that we were more or less stupefied'.<sup>46</sup>

Mass tactics, in the form of bayonet charges, were certainly used to overcome inertia. On 28 April Captain Ellis of 1/Borders (29<sup>th</sup> Division) led his exhausted men in an advance until they were held up by Ottoman fire. They were faced with:

an open bit [of ground] of nearly 200 [yards] literally swept by lead and the only way I could devise of bringing the men up to scratch was to fix bayonets and take them across at the charge.

For these bone-weary men, the crowd morale of a bayonet charge overcame their hesitation.<sup>47</sup> Use of the bayonet charge was allied to the cultivation of extreme aggression in the men, something discouraged by modern professional armies. Such bloodlust could lead to situations such as when 1/5 Manchesters avenged 'the ill-treatment of our men by shooting or bayonetting everyone, & only taking prisoners when the officer was there'.<sup>48</sup>

### Panics

Short-lived 'panic[s]' among troops in the front line, wrote Major-General G.G. Egerton, GOC 52<sup>nd</sup> (Lowland) Division, 'are common in every way'.<sup>49</sup> Hunter-Weston concurred.<sup>50</sup> As far as the Gallipoli campaign was concerned, Egerton was right. His comments were prompted by the events of 13 July 1915. 52<sup>nd</sup> Division had attacked and taken Ottoman trenches on the previous day, sustaining severe casualties in the process. The right flank of the one of the battalions holding the newly captured trench, 1/7 Highland Light Infantry [HLI], was enfiladed by sniping, bombing and machine gun fire. The paucity of men available, and the particularly ghastly conditions in the trench,

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<sup>45</sup> Manchester Regiment Archives, Tameside Local Studies and Archives Centre (MRA/TLSAC), MR3/16/56, Barnes to Flo, 16 May 1915.

<sup>46</sup> Royal Dublin Fusiliers Archive, Dublin City Library, RDFA/018/018/1/3, TS Diary of Cecil and Douglas Gunning, 3 Jan 1916.

<sup>47</sup> BRA/CMML, 'Peninsular Press & Ellis' file, Ellis to wife (ts), 5 May 1915.

<sup>48</sup> MRA/TLSAC, MR3/16/56, Barnes to Jessie, 13 June 1915. For the importance of the bayonet, see Paddy Griffith, *Forward into Battle: Fighting Tactics from Waterloo to Vietnam*, (Chichester: Bird, 1981), *passim*.

<sup>49</sup> TNA, CAB45/249, Egerton papers, comment on draft of Gallipoli Official History, nd, c. June 1929, p. 3.

<sup>50</sup> British Library, BL Add MS48364, Lieutenant-General Sir Alymer Hunter-Weston Papers, Hunter-Weston to Wigram, 8 June 1915.

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especially the stench of corpses, which caused men to vomit, meant that 'only a very primitive consolidation could be made during the night'.<sup>51</sup>

In the early hours of the following day, 'a small trickle of troops, which rapidly became a torrent, poured out from the trenches held by the right of the 157<sup>th</sup> Brigade and rushed back to the old British line'. A handful of officers succeeded in rallying the men and stabilising the situation, leading them back to the captured Ottoman trenches. While the proximate cause of the rout was an order to reduce to 'draw in the exposed right flank', which was misunderstood as an instruction to retire, the Official Historian concisely summarised the underlying reason for the rout began by 1/7 HLI: 'Many of the men, parched with thirst and utterly fatigued by their first day of active operations, were nearing the end of their tether'.<sup>52</sup> 157 Brigade HQ reported that at dusk 'a number of men left the firing line saying that they had been sent back for water etc'.<sup>53</sup> Thus even before the panic set in, soldiers were finding excuses to leave the front line. The rout drew in nearby troops. Men of 1/5 HLI 'were caught up in the rush of men' from their right flank and 'some confusion ensued'. Some of 157 Brigade stood their ground, however, while an officer of 1/5 HLI led a reserve company forward to the abandoned trench. On their own initiative, a machine gun team consisting of six privates of 1/7 Royal Scots brought their weapon into the front line to support 1/7 HLI. RND officers also intervened to rally men of the Lowland Division.<sup>54</sup>

After the war, Egerton admitted that the incident was an 'undoubted panic', but it was sorted out 'within the hour'. Other sources also indicate that the problem was of short duration - the Divisional history stated that the first group of rallied men were back in the trenches 'within five minutes of the retirement', the crisis being effectively over within 30 minutes. The panic had operational, not merely local, significance: a garbled and exaggerated report reached Hunter-Weston at VIII Corps, leading him to order a fresh attack.<sup>55</sup> It also undoubtedly reinforced suspicion in the minds of higher command about the reliability of Territorial soldiers and units.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> TNA, WO 95 /4331, WD, 1/7 HLI, 13 Jul 1915; Thompson, *Fifty-Second Division*, p. 118; Christopher Page, *Command in the Royal Naval Division* (Staplehurst: Spellmount, 1999), p. 53.

<sup>52</sup> Aspinall-Oglander, *Gallipoli*, II, pp. 107-8; Thompson, *Fifty-Second Division*, p. 118; TNA, WO 95/4317, WD 52<sup>nd</sup> Division GS, 12 July 1915.

<sup>53</sup> TNA, WO 95/4321, WD, 157 Bde, 12 July 1915;

<sup>54</sup> TNA, WO 95/4321, WD, 157 Bde, 12 July 1915; TNA, WO 95 /4321, WD, 1/5 HLI, 13 July 1915; Thompson, *Fifty-Second Division*, p. 118-20; TNA, WO 95/4291, WD of HQ Royal Marine Bde., 13 July 1915.

<sup>55</sup> TNA, CAB 45/249, Egerton papers, comment on draft Gallipoli Official History, nd, c. June 1929, p. 3; Aspinall-Oglander, *Gallipoli*, II, pp. 108.

<sup>56</sup> TNA, WO 95/4317, WD 52<sup>nd</sup> Division GS, Braithwaite to Egerton, 17 July 1915.

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In terms of the Marshall Effect, this incident demonstrates the problem of sending into the attack untried and poorly-trained soldiers, commanded by officers and NCOs, most of whom were no better off, and the importance of individual leadership in rallying the men. It shows that high commanders' distrust of Territorials was not entirely unreasonable; these raw 'Terriers' simply lacked the resilience of veterans.<sup>57</sup> However, this panic also suggests that while the morale of these Territorials may have been brittle, it was fundamentally sound. Most men did not rout beyond their own front line. They were halted and quickly brought back into action, and they subsequently held the line until relieved. An eye-witness stated that he saw 'no sign of panic... They came back at a jog-trot as if they were carrying out a retreat (sic) on a field-day'. The Divisional historian stated that officers, NCOs and even some privates rallied the routing troops 'without difficulty... the moment they were told to do so'. The exception was 'always in such cases' - suggesting that the situation was not uncommon - the 'few nerve-shattered men who were stopped with difficulty'. In Clausewitzian terms, it was an example of how the mood of soldiers could change rapidly. However, this incident triggered another, and potentially more serious crisis. The WD of 1/5 Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders recorded that 'This retreat spread to the rear of the Bde (sic) and almost became a panic. Fugitives began to stream... past our HQ and there was some difficulty in stopping the rush and getting them to return to their units'.<sup>58</sup>

Another account of a panic also testified to its short-lived nature. In the early hours of 29 May the appearance of some Gurkhas in No Man's Land triggered panic among some men of 1/Royal Munster Fusiliers, who mistaking them for enemy troops, rushed back from the frontline trench. Second Lieutenant Laidlaw by his own account briefly panicked but recovered his nerve, and 'pricking' a few men with a bayonet he shouted for them to rally:

[but] as quickly as it had started, the panic died down and the men returned and jumped back into the trench. They were thoroughly ashamed of themselves and nothing would have moved them after that. Although most of them had only gone a few yards'.<sup>59</sup>

This basic pattern occurred in a number of examples of panics. Soldiers' nerves broke; they ran back, but were quickly rallied by leaders, who sometimes threatened to shoot panicking soldiers.<sup>60</sup> Major A.H. Mure (1/5 Royal Scots) was one such leader. The

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<sup>57</sup> IWM, 86/31/1, Backhouse diary, 11 May 1915.

<sup>58</sup> Thompson, *Fifty-Second Division*, p. 119; TNA, WO 95/4321, WD 1/5 Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 13 July 1915.

<sup>59</sup> Leeds University, Liddle Collection, GALL 53/1, R.F.E. Laidlaw, ts memoir, p. 28.

<sup>60</sup> See e.g. BRA/CMML, 'Peninsular Press & Ellis' file, Ellis to wife (ts), 5 May 1915 (1/Borders, 28 April 1915); Mercer diary 19 May 1915 (Hawke Battalion); Maj. C.S.

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language he used to describe the incident in May 1915 was suggestive, combined masculinity and patriotic ideology: the men were 'unmanned but for a moment... [then] went over the top again like true Britons'.<sup>61</sup> On 6 June, 19-year-old Second Lieutenant G.D.R. Moor of 2/Hampshires actually shot British soldiers to stem a rout, then leading men in a counterattack which retook a lost position. This action earned Moor the Victoria Cross.<sup>62</sup> All this is evidence that while the mood of soldiers of VIII Corps was volatile, their spirit – their essential willingness to endure and engage in combat – remained fundamentally sound.

### The August Morale Crisis

A 42<sup>nd</sup> Division sapper argued that until the failure of the August offensive, 'all believed that we were winning, and it was just a matter of time until Achi Baba fell'.<sup>63</sup> Likewise, an officer of 1/7 Manchesters thought the failure of the August offensive dashed hopes, 'and the whole aspect of the men... changed. They were sick in mind and in body, and fatigue was incessant'. In reality, sickness was endemic in VIII Corps long before then as were other factors that mentioned as undermining morale: constant enemy fire, the heat, the flies, and the appalling stench. The brutal ending of any hope that the campaign could be brought won severely damaged the morale of the men, undermining their willingness to tolerate hardships for the sake of eventual military success.<sup>64</sup> 42<sup>nd</sup> Division's heavy losses in diversionary actions in support of the August offensive were not irrelevant.<sup>65</sup> An RND officer made much the same case, arguing that in September and October, sickness rates - always a good indicator of the state of morale - were such that 'the war-weary divisions at Cape Helles melted like snow in the noon-day

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Worthington, diary, 4 June 1915, in Robert Bonner (ed.), *Great Gable to Gallipoli* (Knutsford: Fleur de Lys, 2004), p. 22 (1/5 and 1/8 Manchesters); MRA/TLSAC, MR. 4/3/2/43, J. Harrison, ts account (1/7 Manchesters, 8 August 1915).

<sup>61</sup> Mure, *Bloody Place*, pp. 119-20.

<sup>62</sup> C.T. Atkinson, *The Royal Hampshire Regiment*, Vol. II, 1914-1918 (Glasgow: Robert Maclehoose, 1952), p. 87. Moor's extreme action was of a piece with his personality. de Lisle said he was one of the bravest men he met, and that later, on the Western Front, when off-duty (!) Moor would carry out minor operations in the trenches: LHCMA/KCL, Beauvoir de Lisle papers, 'My narrative', pp. 76-7.

<sup>63</sup> *East Lancashire Royal Engineers*, p. 26.

<sup>64</sup> TNA, CAB 19/29, Lieutenant-Colonel A.E.F. Fawcus, evidence to Dardanelles Commission, 1917; TNA, WO 95/4273, WD, GS VIII Corps, 'Minutes of Corps Commander's conference', 7 September 1915. Historians make similar points about morale at Anzac after the August Offensive: Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years* (Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin, 1975), pp. 75-76; Christopher Pugsley, *Gallipoli: The New Zealand Story* (Auckland: Read, 1998 [1984]) p. 329.

<sup>65</sup> Worthington diary, 7 August 1915, in Bonner, *Great Gable*, p. 29.

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sun'.<sup>66</sup> The figures for 52<sup>nd</sup> Division support his assertion, and show that the problem actually grew worse in November, peaking in mid-December.<sup>67</sup> At the end of the year, the numbers of sick and wounded were more than twice as great as at the beginning of September.

<b>Week ending</b>	<b>Officers</b>	<b>Other Ranks</b>	<b>Total</b>
6 September 1915	66	1493	1559
26 September 1915	82	2037	2119
17 October 1915	103	2726	2865
31 October 1915	105	3108	3212
14 November 1915	104	3219	3323
28 November 1915	126	3261	3387
19 December 1915	126	3248	3374
26 December 1915	107	3056	3163

Source: Thompson, *Fifty-Second Division*, pp. 146, 176.

Table 1. *Sick and wounded in hospital and remaining on strength of 52<sup>nd</sup> (Lowland) Division. An unknown additional number were evacuated to UK and are not included in these totals.*

In mid-September, the VIII Corps Deputy Director of Medical Services (DDMS) stated that 'There is throughout the troops a general feeling of lassitude and depression which lowers the power of resistance [to disease]'. However he stated that this phenomenon had been worse previously, which suggests that it had peaked, and he expected the measures intended to boost morale that the new Corps commander was introducing (see below) to make a positive difference.<sup>68</sup>

This shift in attitudes was well understood by senior officers. In mid-September, Egerton visited 52<sup>nd</sup> Division's trenches to find the men 'looked very haggard and worn and tired... I told them we were all pretty well fed-up, but we had got to stick it'.<sup>69</sup> The cohesion of some RND units was under stress even before the failure of the August offensive. The amalgamation of battalions in June, brought about because of heavy losses, caused 'grave discontent'.<sup>70</sup> On 2 August some Royal Naval Volunteer

<sup>66</sup> Douglas Jerrold, *The Royal Naval Division* (London: Hutchinson, 1927), pp. 153-4. For the importance of sickness rates as a measure of morale, see Fennell, *Fighting the People's War*, pp. 704-06.

<sup>67</sup> The blizzard of 26 November 1915 boosted numbers of sick.

<sup>68</sup> TNA, WO 95/4273, WD GS VIII Corps, September 1915, Appx I, 'Minutes of Corps Commander's conference', 14 September 1915.

<sup>69</sup> TNA, CAB45/249, Egerton diary, 12 September 1915.

<sup>70</sup> Imperial War Museum (IWM), DS/Misc/67 Reel I, A. Paris papers, Paris to Christine, 29 June 1915.

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Reserve men of Hood Battalion, including eight Petty Officers, issued a petition demanding to be sent to sea, as 140 stokers had been previously. These men were only too willing to leave the Battalion, and thus Gallipoli. This challenged the beliefs of some officers about the cohesiveness of their unit. By early September, Hood officers were 'depressed' and angry with high command, not least because of the burdens placed on 'the rank and file'.<sup>71</sup>

Discipline is a useful another useful litmus test of morale.<sup>72</sup> At the end of May, the Deputy Judge Advocate General (DJAG) reported that 'considering the inevitable confusion and difficulties attaching to this month's work, crimes were remarkably few'. A month later, he noted there was still relatively little crime on the peninsula, with 'few serious cases'. In July, there were fewer Field General Courts Martial (77) than there had been in June (91), although the force was, at least notionally, larger.<sup>73</sup> Various factors help to explain this including the unattractiveness of deserting to the enemy, and the paucity of places for absentees to hide behind the British lines (although a few reached the beaches). There is little evidence of exceptional levels of minor misdemeanours dealt with at unit level, although this would repay further research.

The strain on the soldiery of the peculiarly testing conditions at Gallipoli prompted a degree of leniency by high command. By the end of May, General Sir Ian Hamilton (GOC Mediterranean Expeditionary Force [MEF]) had commuted all eight death sentences awarded for 'cowardice', 'taking into his consideration the hardships that the men had undergone'. On 21 May brigadiers were empowered to remit suspended sentences.<sup>74</sup> At the end of July, the DJAG reported that the 'policy of suspending sentences whenever possible' had produced 'excellent results'. Of 72 cases, only a handful of offenders 'seriously misused the leniency shown', although one was executed as a consequence. Moreover, from 25 July, Field Punishment No.1, the notorious 'crucifixion' whereby offenders were tied to a fixed object for set amounts of time, was forbidden on Gallipoli. Corps commanders had agreed that because of the fact that it exposed the men to undue punishment, there being practically no situation on the Peninsula secure from shell fire, it was held that such a punishment

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<sup>71</sup> Kelly, diary, 2, 4 August, 2 September 1915, in Cooksey and McKechnie, *Lost Olympian*, pp. 125-6; Page, *Command*, p. 54. Stokers had a 'trade unionist approach' to their employment: James Goldrick, *Before Jutland: The Naval War in Northern European Waters, August 1914-February 1915* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2015), p. 27.

<sup>72</sup> Fennell, *Fighting the People's War*, pp. 704-06.

<sup>73</sup> TNA, WO 154/116, WD, Deputy Judge Advocate [DJAG], Reports by Capt. C. Hodgson, 31 May, 30 June, 31 July 1915.

<sup>74</sup> TNA, WO 154/116, WD, DJAG, Report by Captain C. Hodgson, 31 May, 1915; see also Hamilton's special order of 9 May 1915, in which he praised 'the devoted gallantry... bravery and endurance' (ok) of the troops, quoted in Henry W. Nevinson, *The Dardanelles Campaign* (London: Nisbet, 1918), p. 15.

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was too severe, as well as being unfair to the men'.<sup>75</sup> That such a decision was taken speaks volumes about the extreme nature of everyday life on Gallipoli.

When 'Joey' Davies took command of VIII Corps on 5 August he judged that the morale of the TF formations and RND 'was indifferent. The men were worn out by fighting, by the heat and by the constant fatigues.' Having recently commanded on the Western Front, Davies was unhappy with the laxer approach to discipline he found at Helles; there was little saluting, for example, but there was a recognition that it was impractical to make Field Punishment more severe for Territorials 'under present conditions'. His twin-track approach was to tighten discipline and order 'minor operations' to 'encourage the spirit of keen offensive in the men', while taking measures to improve morale.<sup>76</sup>

From almost the beginning of the campaign, '[o]wing to the difficulties of obtaining rest and sleep' men falling asleep on duty had posed a disciplinary problem for the MEF. In July 'frequent' cases of 'men sleeping on post' were in 'nearly every case... directly due to exhaustion of the men'.<sup>77</sup> A major factor was the weakness of units, ravaged by battle casualties and sickness. 1/4 KOSB, nominally about 1,000 strong, on 13 September consisted of only 230 men, many of whom were sick, of which approximately 150 were holding the trenches – a task that included 'daily digging fatigues'. The rest were used for the exhausting task of carrying food and water to the front line. Such shortage of manpower increased the burden on the men in the trenches; sentries 'fell asleep... on the fire-step once relieved'.<sup>78</sup> The unwelcome attention of flies made it difficult to sleep during the daytime.<sup>79</sup> Cooler weather in early winter led to a diminution in the number of flies, and soldiers' health improved accordingly.<sup>80</sup>

The problem of exhaustion grew worse from August onwards. A battalion commander of 42<sup>nd</sup> Division believed that in September 1915 courts martial, which were 'very

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<sup>75</sup> TNA, WO 154/116, WD, DJAG, Report by Captain C. Hodgson, 31 July. The role of punishment and coercion at Gallipoli deserves further examination. For the broader context, see Anthony King. 'Discipline and Punish: Encouraging Combat Performance in the Citizen and Professional Army' in King, *Frontline*, pp. 93-117.

<sup>76</sup> TNA, WO 95/4273, WD, HQ VIII Corps GS, 'Notes of Corps Commander's conferences', 2 and 14 September 1915; TNA, CAB 19/29, Lieutenant-General Sir F.J. Davies, evidence to Dardanelles Commission, 1917.

<sup>77</sup> TNA, WO 154/116, WD, DJAG, Reports by Captain C. Hodgson, 31 May, 31 July 1915.

<sup>78</sup> Thompson, *Fifty-Second Division*, p. 141.

<sup>79</sup> Australian War Memorial, 3DRL 3741, Delpratt papers, B.B. Delpratt to Nell, nd but c. July 1915.

<sup>80</sup> Peter Hart, *Gallipoli* (London: Profile, 2011), p. 402.

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frequent at Helles', were 'almost exclusively for sleeping on sentry duty'. Officers had to try to keep their men awake in the front line at night. In 'practically in every case' the problem was of 'sheer physical exhaustion'. 42<sup>nd</sup> Division was 'physically incapable of carrying out effective military operations'.<sup>81</sup> Captain Percy, who became DJAG in September 1915, noted the 'very large proportion' of cases of 'sleeping on post'. This was the consequence of 'excessive periods of duty' and 'the want of frequent reliefs', and Percy believed that failures of organisation at regimental level was partly responsible.<sup>82</sup>

Even more striking evidence of morale problems was the rise in the incidence of self-inflicted wounds (SIW). Egerton noted this in 52<sup>nd</sup> Division in September ('men shooting themselves in finger or foot'). Percy also noted the significant increase in SIW, and that most men evacuated from Gallipoli never returned. 'The temptation is therefore greater in this force than in France [where men recovered from wounds often returned], and the benefits to be gained... more easily achieved'.<sup>83</sup> Percy's concerns were reflected in a GHQ memorandum of early November that ordered that all ranks were to be informed that no one suspected or convicted of 'self maiming' would be evacuated from Gallipoli, except 'extreme' cases, who would be sent to Mudros.<sup>84</sup>

Lieutenant-General Davies had a very practical approach to improving morale. He sought to improve leisure facilities, for instance by providing refreshments, raising bands from personnel of each division, and by staging sports matches. Greek labourers were brought into relieve soldiers of some 'heavy' fatigues. Clothes were to be regularly disinfected.<sup>85</sup> Further work is needed to assess how far Davies's plans were realised, but some certainly were. Two snapshots of his efforts are of Hood and Anson teams playing football in the RND final of the 'Dardanelles Cup', and the 52<sup>nd</sup> Divisional Band's rendition of *The Mikado* 'interrupted' by shelling.<sup>86</sup> Davies believed that such

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<sup>81</sup> TNA, CAB 19/30, Lieutenant-Colonel Lord Rochdale, evidence to Dardanelles Commission, 1917.

<sup>82</sup> TNA, WO 154/116, WD, DJAG, Reports by Captain W. Percy, 30 September and 31 October 1915.

<sup>83</sup> TNA, CAB45/249, Egerton diary, 12 September 1915; TNA, WO 154/116, WD, DJAG, Report by Captain W. Percy, 31 October 1915.

<sup>84</sup> TNA, WO 95/4275, WD, VIII Corps A&Q, Colonel A. Cavendish to VIII Corps, 1 November 1915. For an example of collusion in a comrade's SIW, see Murray, diary, 5 Jun e1915, in Murray, *Gallipoli*, pp. 105-7.

<sup>85</sup> TNA, WO95/4275, WD VIII Corps A&Q, 23 September 1915.

<sup>86</sup> WO95/4275, WD AA&QMG VIII Corps, Routine Orders, 12 December 1915; Richardson, *King and Country*, pp. 66-7. Thompson, *Fifty-Second Division*, p. 154, stressed the morale-enhancing effect of the Divisional band.

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measures ensured that ‘*moral* improved and eventually became good’.<sup>87</sup> The latter view is possibly too sanguine, but morale does seem to have improved from the nadir of mid-August.

### Combat Refusal<sup>88</sup>

Perhaps the most striking occurrence of the Marshall Effect at Helles, and how under certain circumstances soldiers could have significant influence on their own fate, occurred in the early hours of 16 August 1915 when a group of men carried out what amounted to a strike located in a military context; ‘collective bargaining in khaki’, in Julian Putkowski’s felicitous phrase.<sup>89</sup> It is possibly significant that these particular strikers were citizen soldiers who had been civilians only months before, at least some of which would have been drawn from an industrial society in which trade unions played an important role.<sup>90</sup>

1/6 Highland Light Infantry (52<sup>nd</sup> Division) began an attempt to capture trenches in the Vineyard sector.<sup>91</sup> The plan was to use three waves of 30 men, with the waves being some 25 yards apart. At 0230 Lieutenant Wyllie climbed out of the frontline trench and ‘walked in a crawling position for about 25 yards without looking behind me’. A voice close by him then said “‘Mr. Wyllie, the men are not following you’”. Wyllie shouted, “Come on 6<sup>th</sup>” but reached the Ottoman trench he was ‘alone as far as I could see’. Second Lieutenant Glendenning similarly advanced 10 yards into No Man’s Land before realising that he was alone. A large majority of the men failed to follow

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<sup>87</sup> TNA, WO95/4275, WD VIII Corps A&Q, 23 September 1915; TNA, CAB 19/29, Lieutenant-General Sir F.J. Davies, evidence to the Dardanelles Commission, 1917. See Christopher S. Forrest, ‘The 52<sup>nd</sup> (Lowland) Division in the Great War, 1914-18’ (Ph. D, University of Salford, 2009) pp. 114-15, 117, for the impact on morale of Egerton’s replacement with Major-General H.A. Lawrence.

<sup>88</sup> Leonard V. Smith defends the use of this term rather than that of ‘mutiny’ in the context of the disturbance in the French army in spring 1917 as it ‘reflects the fluid nature of the events themselves’ (*Between Mutiny and Obedience: The Case of the French Fifth Infantry Division during World War I* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 183. The same applies to the incident discussed below.

<sup>89</sup> J. Putkowski to the *Guardian*, 26 September 1986.

<sup>90</sup> For strikes in the British army during the First World War, see Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches*, pp. 151-54. See also Leonard V. Smith, ‘Mutiny’, in Jay Winter (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the First World War, Volume II, The State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 196, 201-02; Watson, *Enduring the Great War*, pp. 207-12.

<sup>91</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all information and quotations in the following six paragraphs is from TNA, WO 95/4273, WD, VIII Corps WD, ‘Court of Enquiry...’, 21 August 1915. See also Robin Prior, *Gallipoli: The End of the Myth* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010 [2009]) and Forrest, ‘52<sup>nd</sup> Division’, pp. 90-101.

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their officers; either declining to leave the trenches, or going only a short distance once they had gone over the top: Corporal Martin, who went 10-12 yards forward of the British position, saw 'men moving back on their hands and knees'. Although some men did attack and engaged in some stiff fighting, at 0305 the battalion CO, Colonel Millar, was informed that the assault was a complete failure.

Some witnesses to the subsequent Court of Enquiry speculated that the rum ration may not have been diluted. The system in the battalion was for a mess tin of rum to be sent along the line, with men placed on their honour not to have more than a mouthful. It is possible that some men, lacking the supervision more usual in the army during the distribution of rum, drank excessively and were emboldened by alcohol to defy orders. Whatever the case, the men of 1/6 HLI used a number of strategies to avoid making the attack. Some feigned wounds or sickness; and in the dark it would have been difficult to discover whether or not they were shamming. Some simply 'sneaked away' in the darkness before the attack (one wave was reduced from a nominal 30 to only 24 men by various means). Several rankers claimed to have heard an order to retire. It is unclear whether this was an outright fabrication, or whether someone did indeed pass along this unauthorised instruction. Outright defiance was avoided in favour of evasion and malingering, and there seems to have been some coordination to thwart the attack. Colonel Millar blamed NCOs as well as the private soldiers for the failure of the assault, although at least some NCOs did attempt to carry put orders.

These assault parties demonstrated a great deal of cohesion. Rather than this leading to positive combat motivation, this was an occasion when achieving the goals specified by military leadership was regarded as less important by the group than keeping that group intact.<sup>92</sup> One of the major responsibilities of leaders is to ensure that group goals are congruent with those of higher command.<sup>93</sup> 1/6 HLI's officers failed in this task. This failure began at the top. As recently as 2 August, Egerton had been doubtful about the Division's combat effectiveness following its losses in mid-July, but twelve days later he evidently thought that 1/6 HLI at least had recovered sufficiently, so he chose it, his 'best battalion', for the operation. Although in 1914 Egerton had selected Millar for command, after the operation he described Millar as 'greatly lacking in interest, energy, and initiative, throughout the whole affair'.<sup>94</sup> Millar had failed to visit the front line that night, instead remaining in contact by telephone. He had also issued verbal rather than written orders and this led to confusion about when the advance was to commence. Egerton's view was that Brigade's orders were 'not at fault', but the operation was 'ill-prepared regimentally'. Egerton criticised the 'negative role' of Captain C. Macfie, the Adjutant, but recognised that as Regular officer, Millar might

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<sup>92</sup> King, *Combat Soldier*, p. 31.

<sup>93</sup> Sheffield, *Leadership*, p. 43.

<sup>94</sup> TNA, WO 95/4273 Egerton's report, 21 August 1915.

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not have paid much attention to his Territorial subordinate; Macfie's evidence hints at discord between the two men.<sup>95</sup>

There were strong indications that all was not well with the men well before the attack was launched. Macfie testified that two soldiers 'fainted when the order to attack was given, and that he saw three men in the barricades sobbing'. Glendenning realised that his platoon 'did not seem very lively and [he] tried to cheer them up, telling them "we must see it through" and things of that sort'. Captain Daly, Officer Commanding C Company, 'did not consider they [the men] were fit for the first attack as they were tired out'. The officers did not act upon these warnings. It would have been asking a great deal of junior officers to call off their part of an attack, but very occasionally a battalion commander would do so. The buck stopped with Millar.

In retrospect, the malady was obvious. The battalion had not properly recovered from the heavy losses sustained in the fighting for Achi Baba Nullah on 12 July. The soldiers and most of the officers had been civilians just a few months before, and they were not members of an anonymous war-raised unit. On the contrary, 1/6 HLI was a community with deep roots in civil society of Scotland. Men were frightened and in mourning because of the recent catastrophic losses. As Egerton belatedly realised, these Territorials lacked the discipline and staying power of Regulars; or, one might add, veteran citizen troops.<sup>96</sup> A clearer example of the contingent nature of military obedience would be difficult to find. Inter-rank relations in the British army in the First World War were based on the exchange of deference in return for paternalistic leadership. If Other Ranks believed that their officers were in breach of the unwritten contract, they were perfectly capable of making their feelings known and taking action, up to and including large-scale mutiny.<sup>97</sup> The men of the HLI's behaviour in August 1915 was technically an act of mutiny, but in reality it was a way of conveying to their officers that they were unwilling to obey orders that they considered unreasonable. It is important to note that there was no violence against the officers, nor did the discipline of the unit collapse on a permanent basis. Rather, it was a stark reminder to its commanders that the unit's willingness to engage in combat could not be taken for granted.

Davies condemned this combat refusal in an order that shamed their identity as Scots, and, implicitly, their masculinity.<sup>98</sup> Egerton issued a memorandum to his officers criticising the tendency towards a live-and-let-live approach to the enemy, bluntly

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<sup>95</sup> TNA, CAB45/249, Egerton diary, 2, 16 August 1915. For the instructions from Brigade, see WO 95/4321, WD, 1/6 HLI August 1915, Appx 7, 15 August 1915.

<sup>96</sup> TNA, CAB45/249 Egerton diary, 16 August 1915.

<sup>97</sup> Sheffield, *Leadership*, pp. 70-71, 150-52.

<sup>98</sup> WO 95/4273, WD, VIII Corps, Davies to Egerton, 18 August 1915.

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ordering aggressive action.<sup>99</sup> This may have been a response to being warned by his three brigade commanders that while they believed their men would ‘repel’ an assault, they ‘would not like to make an attack’. Egerton was conflicted. He was sleeping badly, had nightmares, and was haunted by his Division’s losses. He did not mince words in speaking to his superiors, which probably contributed to him being sacked in mid-September.<sup>100</sup> By that time Egerton had come to share the doubts of his brigadiers as to whether his troops could be trusted on the offensive.<sup>101</sup> 52<sup>nd</sup> Division was not completely spared from being sent into battle, but in the short term it may have made higher commanders more cautious about using it.

### Concluding thoughts

This article has demonstrated that Anthony King’s ‘Marshall Effect’ thesis, defined broadly, is a useful analytical tool when applied to VIII Corps at Helles. Although the men of 29<sup>th</sup> Division, at least in the early stages of the campaign, were a partial exception, the troops of the Corps were inexperienced, poorly trained and too often indifferently led. They were spooked by the empty battlefield and showed, from the perspective of higher command, worrying traits of inertia. King argues that officers attempted to overcome passivity by using mass assaults, appealing to ideology and masculinity, encouraging high levels of aggression, and providing heroic leadership by charismatic individuals. These were precisely the means employed by officers at Helles. In fact, VIII Corps on Gallipoli was an extreme example of the type of citizen army discussed by King. The Dardanelles campaign occurred at the very beginning of the British army’s learning process; for example, VIII Corps grew more proficient at trench warfare even while the campaign was in progress.<sup>102</sup> However, the jury is out on the question of whether King’s Marshall Effect theory is more widely applicable. Further research is needed to see whether the theory is valid when applied to the much more sophisticated, better-trained, better-equipped and better-led citizen armies of the British Empire in the latter years of the Great War.

The morale of the troops of VIII Corps was severely tested from the beginning of the Gallipoli campaign. However, as the rash of short-lived panics demonstrated, to use Clausewitz’s terminology, while soldiers’ ‘mood’ was undoubtedly fragile, their ‘spirit’ remained essentially sound. For the most part, soldiers were willing, albeit at times reluctantly, to engage in combat. August 1915 marked a downturn in morale, with optimism about the eventual outcome of the campaign being replaced by pessimism,

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<sup>99</sup> For the Western Front, see Tony Ashworth. *Trench Warfare, 1914-1918: The Live and Let Live System* (London: Macmillan, 1980).

<sup>100</sup> Robert Rhodes James, *Gallipoli* (London, Papermac, 1989 [1965]), p. 231; Elaine MacFarland, ‘A Slashing Man of Action’: *The Life of Lieutenant-General Sir Aylmer Hunter-Weston MP* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2014), pp. 206-7.

<sup>101</sup> TNA, CAB45/249, Egerton diary, 28, 30 August, 1, 12 September 1915.

<sup>102</sup> Sheffield, ‘Shaping... Soldiers’ Experience’, pp. 35-40.

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but even then, morale was a long way from collapsing. The agency that soldiers exercised at various times, not least by the men of 1/6 HLI on 16 August, illustrates what could have happened if there had been a general and permanent breakdown of morale, in the sense of willingness to obey the orders of higher command.<sup>103</sup>

This article began with Private Bert Lee's description of men being 'all pretty well fed up and worn out'. For one of Lee's officers in 1/7 Manchesters, the endurance of his men was a matter of pride, resonating with contemporary notions of masculinity:

The average soldier on Gallipoli broke down after a month or two. Comparatively few endured more than three months...The memory that dominates all recollections of Gallipoli is that of the grandeur of the British soldier [of 42<sup>nd</sup> Division] ... their gallantry in the early assaults and their inflexible fortitude in the trenches – pestered by flies, enfeebled by dysentery, stinted of water, and worn out by hardships - are a lasting title to honour.<sup>104</sup>

At Cape Helles, as on the Western Front, British military morale was generally characterised by stoicism and resilience in the face of adverse conditions.

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<sup>103</sup> It is beyond the scope of this article to carry out extensive comparisons, but for suggestive parallels with the morale of other in Great War British Empire troops on extra-European fronts, see Andrekos Varnava, *Serving the empire in the Great War: The Cypriot Mule Corps, imperial loyalty and silenced memory* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2017); *idem*, 'The vagaries and value of the army transport mule in the British army during the First World War', *Historical Research*, vol. 90, no. 248 (May 2017); Charles Townshend, *When God Made Hell: The British invasion of Mesopotamia and the Creation of Iraq 1914-1922* (London, Faber and Faber, 2010), pp. 144-45, 239-246; James E. Kitchen, *The British Imperial Army in the Middle East: Morale and Military Identity in the Sinai and Palestine Campaigns, 1916-18* (London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

<sup>104</sup> Gerald B. Hurst, *With the Manchesters in the East*, (London: Longmans, 1918), pp. 67, 75.

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### **Appendix: Order of Battle of VIII Corps, August 1915 (infantry units and formations only)<sup>105</sup>**

#### **29th Division**

*86 Brigade:*

2/Royal Fusiliers

1/Lancashire Fusiliers

1/Royal Munster Fusiliers

1/Royal Dublin Fusiliers

*87 Brigade:*

2/South Wales Borderers

1/King's Own Scottish Borderers

1/Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers

1/Border Regiment

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<sup>105</sup> C.E. Callwell, *The Dardanelles* (London: Constable, 1924), pp. 350-5.

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*88 Brigade:*

- 4/Worcestershire Regiment
- 2/Hampshire Regiment
- 1/Essex Regiment
- 1/5 Royal Scots (Territorial Force.)

### **42nd (East Lancashire) Division (Territorial Force)**

*125 Brigade:*

- 1/5 Lancashire Fusiliers
- 1/6 Lancashire Fusiliers
- 1/7 Lancashire Fusiliers
- 1/8 Lancashire Fusiliers

*126 Brigade:*

- 1/4 East Lancashire Regiment
- 1/5 East Lancashire Regiment
- 1/9 Manchester Regiment
- 1/10 Manchester Regiment

*127 Brigade:*

- 1/5 Manchester Regiment
- 1/6 Manchester Regiment
- 1/7 Manchester Regiment
- 1/8 Manchester Regiment

### **52nd (Lowland) Division (Territorial Force)**

*155 Brigade:*

- 1/4 Royal Scots Fusiliers
- 1/5 Royal Scots Fusiliers
- 1/4 King's Own Scottish Borderers
- 1/5 King's Own Scottish Borderers

*156 Brigade:*

- 1/4 Royal Scots
- 1/7 Royal Scots
- 1/7 Scottish Rifles
- 1/8 Scottish Rifles

*157 Brigade:*

- 1/5 Highland Light Infantry
- 1/6 Highland Light Infantry
- 1/7 Highland Light Infantry
- 1/5 Argyll and Southerland Highlanders

**Royal Naval Division**

*1 Brigade:*

Drake Battalion

Nelson Battalion

Hawke Battalion

Hood Battalion

*2 Brigade:*

No.1 Battalion, Royal Marine Light Infantry

No.2 Battalion, Royal Marine Light Infantry

Howe Battalion

Anson Battalion