



The Soldiers' Newspaper

# Army

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LCpl Michael Delapena, of 3RAR, prepares for a live-fire assault.  
Photo by Cpl Mark Doran

**Skills tested on  
3 Bde Combined  
Arms Training  
Activity**

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# BATTLE READY



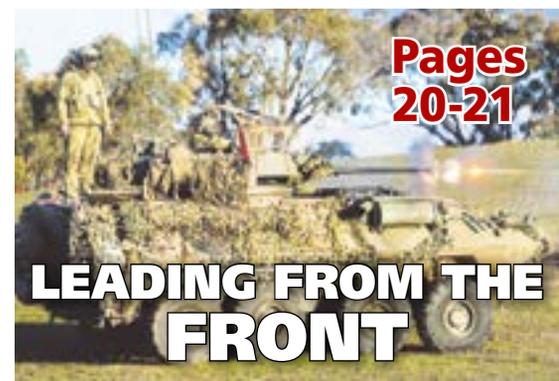
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**LEADING FROM THE  
FRONT**

# Learning from past battles

Artillery lessons from Anzac Cove offer insight to modern firepower, Sgt Dave Morley reports.

**T**HE first in a series of seminars titled Firepower: Lessons from the Great War, which was held at ADFA on May 13, attracted a large audience of military professionals and history enthusiasts.

Royal Australian Artillery Historical Company organiser Lt-Col Nick Floyd said he was happy with the quality and diversity of the presentations, and how each explored a different aspect of the Anzac landing, which was the subject of the first seminar.

"It was great to have both the calibre of speakers we had, as well as the special contribution provided by Maj-Gen Steve Gower (Retd) as compere and host," he said.

"The presentations were candid, objective and professional in their calibre, but equally entertaining and informative.

"Having the Kiwi and Indian Army perspectives told were special treats – they and the naval gunfire support presentations ensured we all considered the broader firepower problem."

Speakers included former SASR CO Brig Chris Roberts (Retd), Pakistan Military Adviser Brig Muhammad Asghar, New Zealand Military Adviser Lt-Col Bob Moody, Sea Power Centre historian Cmdr David Stevens and *Just Soldiers* author Maj Darryl Kelly.

Brig Roberts outlined the role of artillery pre-1914, where infantry commanders planned the tactics and artillery simply followed, and

communication was by means of signal flags or heliograph.

He said Comd 1 Div Maj-Gen William Bridges initially didn't want artillery ashore at Gallipoli in case the guns were captured, and actually sent some guns back to the transport ships.

"There was also some difficulty finding positions for the guns," he said.

"Later when they came ashore they worked as one or two-gun positions and set the fuses for the shells to go off as soon as they left the barrels in order to cut down the Turks as they crossed the wheat fields."

Maj Kelly did what he does best, telling the personal stories of individual diggers.

One of his stories told of Gnr Harry Wilson, of 4 Bty, a motor mechanic from Melbourne.

"During a savage Turkish counter-battery bombardment, he continued to man his gun even when seriously wounded by shrapnel," Maj Kelly said.

"For his actions he was Mentioned in Despatches and was one of the first recipients of the Military Medal for Bravery in the Field – but his bravery also cost him his left leg."

Navy historian Cmdr David Stevens said naval gunfire support hadn't received good press for its role at Gallipoli, but attributed this to several factors.

"Poor communications, fragile sea plans, having to fire on the move and guns and ammunition designed for an anti-shipping role didn't help," he said.

"Two services with a different

culture and terminology was a recipe for disaster.

"However, a 15-inch shell, containing 15,000 shrapnel balls from one of HMS Queen Elizabeth's eight guns, was credited with destroying a Turkish regiment."

Lt-Col Moody said the New Zealand Artillery acquired 18-pounder guns and 4.5-inch howitzers in 1911.

"The NZ Army was involved in the 1914 attack on Apia in German Samoa," he said.

"Later NZ field gunners went ashore in Egypt where they were able to train, and then to Lemnos where they trained in loading and unloading their guns and horses from transport ships.

"NZ soldiers were in action within 20 minutes of landing at Gallipoli, but ammunition was scarce.

"During the Sari Bair offensive in August 1915, the NZ Army and NZ Mounted Rifles easily repelled a Turkish attack."

Brig Muhammad Asghar spoke on "the forgotten soldiers" of the Gallipoli campaign – the Indian gunners of 7 Indian Mountain Arty Bde – and their close links with Australian gunners.

"The unit comprised 21 Kohat Bty and 26 Jacob's Bty," he said.

"26 Jacob's Bty landed on April 26 – the first artillery battery to land at Gallipoli – and immediately went into action. It was the last artillery unit to leave Gallipoli in December 1915.

"After heavy casualties an



A 4 Fd Bty sub-gun camouflaged with sandbags and branches, a popular method of concealing field guns. This gun was the first Australian gun to go ashore at Gallipoli.

Australian officer and 20 gunners were attached and the Australians metaphorically took the Indian gunners to their hearts."

Lt-Col Floyd said he was also pleased with the diverse and distinguished audience.

"There were retired and serving gunners and other service personnel, but also a strong showing from academia and the wider community," he said.

Commandant ADFA Air-Cdre Alan Clements and Head of Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) Prof David Lovell also attended.

"This was special because both have been particularly supportive of the seminar series idea in the provision of facilities and other support.

"HASS and ADFA have offered to be ongoing partners for the series,

along with Australian Army History Unit and the United Services Institute (ACT).

"We really appreciate the support."

Lt-Col Floyd said he learnt a lot from the seminar about aspects of gunnery, combined arms and command and control at Anzac Cove.

"I am confident we are on track to have a great story told about how firepower evolved during the Great War, as we proceed through the 11-seminar series," he said.

"The lessons on what was important then and what remains important now are already evident, after this first seminar."

The next seminar is scheduled for August 26 at ADFA.

Podcasts are available on the RAAHC website at [www.artilleryhistory.org](http://www.artilleryhistory.org)

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HMS Queen Elizabeth.



Left, a group of Indian gunners near 1 Bn's camp at the foot of White's Valley on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

Photos courtesy AWM