

How Dowsing Saved Lives in Gallipoli, 1915

A triumphant dowsing story of Sapper Stephen Kelly's extraordinary success, but with a sad ending, by permission of Aaron Dabbah – <https://esoterx.com>

The First World War's Gallipoli campaign pretty much sucked for everybody involved. The initial point was to secure the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkish Thrace, allowing Allied Navies access to the Black Sea, hopefully opening a pathway for the capture of the Ottoman Empire's capital in Constantinople [known today as Istanbul].

In what was initially a bold series of amphibious landings, the Allied forces quickly bogged down under tenacious Ottoman defences and counter attacks, and the campaign dragged on for eight months of nasty trench warfare, dwindling ammunition, supply and logistics nightmares, and an astonishing number of casualties.

Gallipoli was considered one of the worst fighting fronts where British and Commonwealth forces were deployed during the First World War due to the fierce battles, plague of flies (due to all the putrefying corpses), rations that consisted purely of unappetising biscuits, jam and tinned bully beef,

weather that alternated between blisteringly hot and dangerously cold (punctuated by torrential rain), lice infestations, dysentery epidemics, inhospitable rocky terrain, and the near complete absence of available fresh water.

Of all the obvious health code violations, the lack of water in the dusty, dry Gallipoli peninsula, particularly at Anzac Cove, was the most dangerous (apart from all the bullets and artillery whizzing about). The situation was so dire that fresh water was shipped in by boat and stored in large tanks, but this was an iffy proposition given all the submarines lurking about torpedoing other vessels.

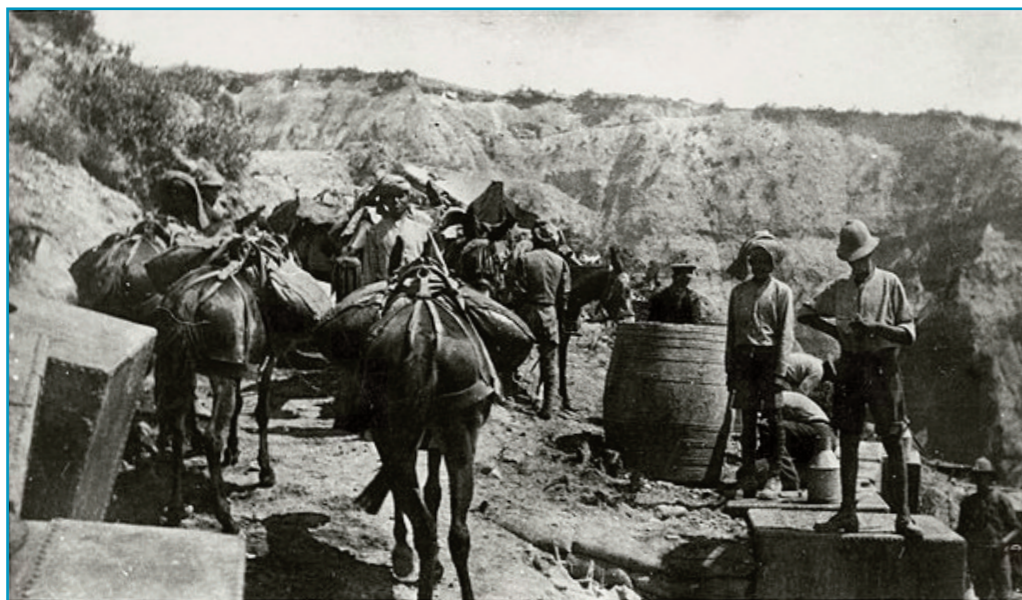
The newly formed Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) joined the British-led First World



Sapper Stephen Kelly of the 3rd Light Horse Brigade, Australian Expeditionary Force, and water diviner.

War army corps of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force in 1915, for deployment at Gallipoli. Almost immediately they started to run out of water. (It had to be imported from Malta and moved up mountainous terrain by mule to the front line trenches.)

The Allied engineers tried to dig wells, but repeatedly came up dry. Apparently, the Turks thought the Allies were a bit daft for trying. This is the sort of nonsense you don't want to have to deal with while you're trying to wage a respectable war. Thirsty soldiers are very quickly dead soldiers. And just as there are no atheists in foxholes, generals throughout history have never been excessively reluctant to give an occult remedy a good



Water had to be imported from Malta and moved up mountainous terrain by mule to the front line trenches. <https://commons.wikimedia.org> Army_personnel_taking_a_tally_of_water_at_Gallipoli_(9659164285).jpg



Soldier giving prisoner a drink - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:British_soldier_with_Turkish_prisoner_Gallipoli_1915.jpg

old-fashioned college try.

The absence of water was one of the greatest difficulties in connection with the holding of the position on the Gallipoli Peninsula. The Turks, in fact, boasted that it was untenable by a large body of troops for this very reason. The arrangements accordingly made by the authorities for water distribution were on a vast scale. It was actually brought from Malta, being towed in huge barges to the improvised piers at Anzac Cove. On the beach a large steam-pumping plant was erected, which pumped the water from the barges to large tanks on both the right and the left of the Anzac position. The difficulties of supplying water under these conditions were grave in the extreme, especially as the heat was intense, and the least hitch in the organisation led to a shortage of the supply.¹

As the situation worsened, Sapper Stephen Kelly of the 3rd Light Horse Brigade, Australian Expeditionary Force, in his unofficial capacity as a water diviner, came to the attention of the General Staff.

While they no doubt regarded themselves as rational men, 'any port in a storm', as they say.

Sapper Kelly was a Kent man, born in Maidstone. He went out to Queensland when a small boy. Before the family left the UK, however, an old water diviner arrived in the neighbourhood and tried his art in that locality. The boy trotted after the old man in his twistings and turnings about the paddock with a divining twig in his hand and when the old man found water, the boy 'felt his nerves twitch and a thrill go through him that wasn't just excitement.'

He thought he would try too, and he did. From that moment he had practiced his powers at every opportunity. At Suvla, he said he got better results with a copper rod than with the divining twig.²

As it turned out, Sapper Kelly had a real talent for the ancient art of dowsing, and as a patriot

Australian didn't hesitate to set about unearthing a source of water as efficiently and effectively as possible under the circumstances.

Matters had become very serious, and a complete breakdown was threatened, when the attention of the generals in command was drawn to Sapper Kelly's reputation

as a dowser. He was sent to headquarters, and asked to endeavour to discover if there were any indications of underground water in the area.

Early next morning Kelly started on his investigations, and very soon located water within a hundred yards of Divisional Headquarters. On being opened up by the engineers, the well was found to give a volume of over 2,000 gallons of pure cold artesian water per hour.

Two other wells were subsequently opened up in the immediate vicinity. By six o'clock that evening every man in the section had his water-bottle filled, and within a week Kelly had located the positions of over thirty-two wells, on which pumps were subsequently erected. The water supply obtained in consequence was calculated to be sufficient for 100,000 men with one gallon per day per man.

It must be remembered that not only did the troops require water, but there were also thousands of mules which also required watering, and that one mule will drink as much water as twenty men.

The instrument used by Sapper Kelly was a small piece of copper which he held in his hands and by which he ascertained the depths at which the water was to be found and also whether it was a 'pocket' of water, a spring, or an underground



Soldiers drawing water at an old Turkish Well, from the book Gallipoli p.248 by kind permission of author Stephen Chambers.



The incessant heat and dust of the summer is apparent in this image taken of a New Zealand water carrier. From the book Gallipoli p.258 by kind permission of author Stephen Chambers.

river. Previous to these experiments the engineers in their endeavours to find water had sunk shafts within fifty yards of the spot indicated by Kelly and had gone considerably deeper into the earth than he had found necessary, but without success.³

Understandably, ‘The army’s engineers were astonished by Sapper Kelly’s success, especially as he was without paper plans. When they asked him about it, he replied that it would take him about half the time to get the wells going than it would to draw up the plans.’⁴

Nothing succeeds like success. Kelly was ‘personally congratulated by the General in command, and was mentioned in dispatches.’ (*Occult Review*, 1917, p.73).

No muss, no fuss. They needed to get on with the business of slaughtering and being slaughtered, eventually evacuating the Gallipoli Peninsula after eight months of insurmountable nastiness and over 500,000 casualties between the Allied and Ottoman Forces.

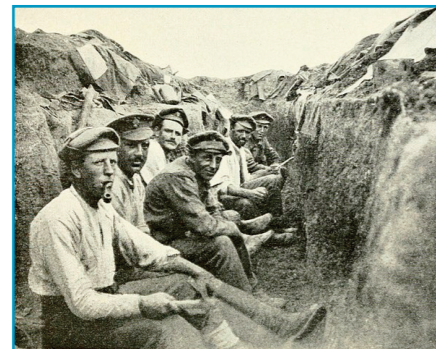
Numerous accounts of eyewitnesses to the debacle at Gallipoli mention the invaluable services of Sapper Kelly. For example, a staff officer was

recorded by Corporal O. Rhodes, 20th Battalion, A.I.F. at Otago Gully, Gallipoli as saying,

‘By the way, water was our great difficulty here when we first started on this new venture and at one period it threatened to be quite critical, but thanks to a wonderful Australian water diviner, Sapper Kelly of the Australian Engineers, who found us 200,000 gallons a day, we were saved.’

People don’t tend to forget the guy who saves them all from death by dehydration. Even more telling is that official transcripts from the British House of Commons include references to the exploits of Sapper Kelly. (*See right.*) Of course, they noted his skills and thought about sending him to Palestine to help with water shortages there. That’s the army for you.

<https://esoterx.com/2016/09/12/gallipoli-dowsing-when-falling-from-a-great-height-try-flapping-your-arms/>



[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:With_the_Twenty-ninth_division_in_Gallipoli,_a_chaplain%27s_experiences_\(1916\)__\(14595461207\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:With_the_Twenty-ninth_division_in_Gallipoli,_a_chaplain%27s_experiences_(1916)__(14595461207).jpg)

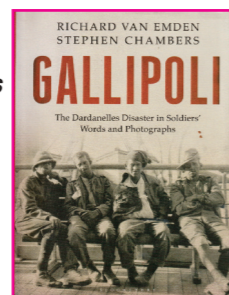
GALLIPOLI

The Dardanelles Disaster in Soldiers’

Words and Photographs

by Richard van Emden and Stephen Chambers

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Questions in Parliament

Major Hunt asked a question in Parliament in 1915 of the Under-Secretary of State for War, believed to be a Mr MacPherson, saying, ‘Although Sapper Stephen Kelly was mentioned in dispatches for finding water in Gallipoli without which thousands of men must have died or left their positions, why couldn’t this man later get employment in the Army?’

The reply from Mr MacPherson was extraordinary: I have ascertained from the headquarters of the Australian Imperial Force that Sapper Kelly was found to be permanently unfit for any Army service by a board of consultants on 24th May 1915 owing to a disability which is not due to service, and that he was discharged accordingly. I understand that there is no record of any application for re-enlistment.

Major Hunt then asked, ‘As this man was the only man who could find water in Gallipoli, could he not be employed by the Government in Palestine, where they are badly off for water, as he is known to be the best water-finder in Australia?’

Mr MacPherson: I have been unable to ascertain the nature of Sapper Kelly’s eventual disability, but I comfort myself with the notion that it was probably just an overabundance of awesomeness that is not totally compatible with the more modest military lifestyle. That, and his spooky, occult powers. Perhaps he simply retired to a well-deserved, quiet life of basking in his super-hero status.’

As has been observed: Sapper Kelly did not even get a stripe, let alone a medal. That’s the Army for you too.

References:

- ¹ Carrington, 1919, p132–133.
- ² Masani, 1918, p105.
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- ⁴ Masani, 1918, p105.

The Gallipoli Association does a wonderful job keeping the memory of the campaign alive, and this article will appear on their website in due course.

www.gallipoli-association.org