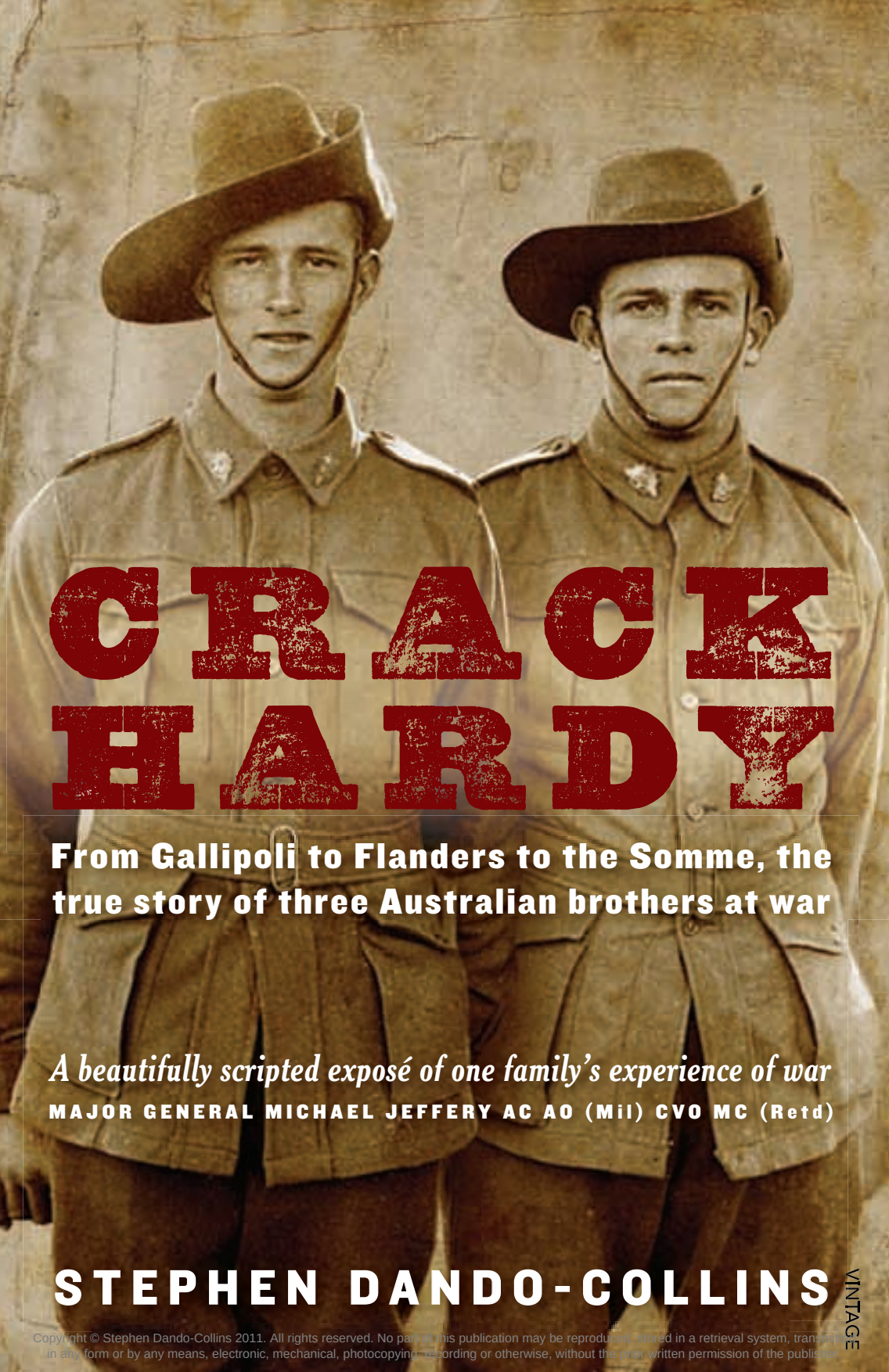

CRACK HARDY

From Gallipoli to Flanders to the Somme, the true story of three Australian brothers at war

A beautifully scripted exposé of one family's experience of war

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INTRODUCTION

Viv, Ray and Ned Searle were my great-uncles. Their sister Doris was my grandmother, and her daughter Gwen, my mother. For years, I wanted to tell their story. Yet, it was too personal, too painful. In 1914, all three of 'the boys', as I've always thought of them, left the Australian country town where they were raised, to volunteer to fight in the First World War. Between 1915 and 1918 they fought in many major battles, from Gallipoli to the Western Front. Two brothers died in those battles. Only one came home, returning a decorated hero.

Even when the diaries and letters of the boys were unearthed in 1991, I resisted the temptation to write about them, despite the fact that their words made the trio and their trials and tribulations so real to me. Especially when the discovery of those documents prompted my mother to share memories of her uncles, aunts and grandparents with me at length. But still I held back. Then, several years ago, while researching another book in Canberra, my wife Louise and I paid a visit to the Australian War Memorial, Australia's shrine to the men and women who have given their lives in numerous conflicts since the nineteenth century. And that day, everything changed.

It was in the War Memorial's Commemorative Area. Four 'fuzzy-wuzzies', Papua-New Guinea natives, stood staring at us. Three were dressed in smart business suits, shirts and ties, but all

wore traditional feather headdresses. One carried a tribal drum, and was entirely in native New Guinea attire, with a long boar-teeth necklace draped around his neck and a wooden spear in his left hand. His youthful, trim brown body seemed at odds with his long white beard. All four looked at Louise and myself as if this place was, to them, spooky, like a giant graveyard.

The New Guinean men had apparently come to pay their respects to the World War Two 'diggers' who had fallen in their homeland fighting the Japanese invader. Perhaps, too, they were honouring the Australians who wrested German New Guinea from German control in 1914 during the early days of World War One. The PNG men parted to let us pass, but did not take their eyes off us. It was as if they wanted to tell us something. Yet they did not speak, and nor did my wife or myself.

I was single-minded in my quest for a pair of names among those of the 60,000 First World War Australian dead on the walls here, the names of two of my great-uncles. I found one name quite quickly, at chest height, and adorned it with one of two red crepe poppies I had purchased for a couple of dollars in the AWM shop. The other name evaded me. A young man appeared at my side. An employee of the War Memorial, he knew by the poppy in my hand that I had come in search of a relative. In his twenties, round-faced, with glasses, the young man asked politely, reverently, who I was searching for, and the number of his battalion. I gave him both, and he helped me locate the name of the second of my great-uncles. It was high up, well out of reach, so the young man bustled away, to soon return with a stepladder.

My helper held the ladder as I climbed it. And then I was face-to-face with the name of my maternal grandmother's brother. When he died, he would have been younger than the kindly youth holding the ladder for me. Slowly, I traced my fingers over the raised bronze print of my great-uncle's name, and as I did, to my surprise, I began to choke up. I had never known him; he had died long before I was born. Yet, here I was, feeling as if I was meeting him for the first time, as if he was here, living, in this wall. Overwhelmed with sadness, I jammed the poppy into the wall beside his name.

Step by aluminium step, I returned to the ground. Louise said

something to me, but I couldn't respond. She thanked the young man for his help, and firmly took my arm. With measured paces we began to walk away together. The fuzzy-wuzzies were ahead. Again they parted to let us by. After we had passed them, I felt the need to look back. We stopped, and turned. The gaze of the fuzzy-wuzzies had followed us. They still bore that same expression. It was as if they had seen a ghost. Or ghosts.

Was it my vivid imagination, or was I now seeing figures behind the fuzzy-wuzzies? My two great-uncles. And, clustered behind them, hundreds, thousands of other washed-out young men in khaki. Some were leaning on the shoulders of their mates. All were watching me. There was a look of expectation on their pale, innocent faces.

It was then that I made a promise to my great-uncles – that, one day, I would tell their story, and the story of their mates. Their true story. As best I could.

It was a Dando – Una Dando – who first uncovered a dusty bundle of Searle brothers letters in a woodshed two decades ago. One option was to toss them out. But Una passed them onto schoolteacher cousin Craig Searle, thinking he might find a use for them. Craig, who had been collecting letters, poems, diaries and photographs as he traced the Searle family tree, collated this material in 1991 and circulated copies around the family. The following year, another family member unearthed Viv Searle's wartime diary.

So, here I had the family's story in writing; and all the conversations and quotations in this book are taken from their letters and diaries. I also had my mother's vivid memories. But, to tie it all together, and to put the Searle brothers' story into the context of the broader story of Australia's Great War, I needed to undertake extensive archival research. That would occupy several years, and take my wife and research partner Louise and myself to a number of records repositories. We would also talk with historians, and with fellow descendants of AIF (Australian Imperial Force) men who shared their letters, diaries and remembrances with me.

'This is exciting!' exclaimed the National Museum of Australia's Research Director Dr Peter Stanley as he, Louise and I delved into

several aspects from my great-uncles' letters and diaries that puzzled me. For, it turned out that some of these questions were even new to Peter, a noted military author and former principal historian with the Australian War Memorial. Via the Searle boys, we were sometimes covering entirely new ground.

For days on end, at the Australian War Memorial, Louise and I sat reading diaries written by both Australian and German soldiers. Here, scrawled across small pages in some tent or trench, was the human side of war. Some of this I would be able to use; General William Bridges' struggle to give up smoking, for example. There was so much more I wanted to use, but could not for reasons of space and relevance.

I will never forget the diary of German soldier Robert Winter. He wrote of two dreams, one within the other. He was dreaming of the girl he had left behind in Koenigsberg kissing another man. In his dream, Winter woke up in a rowboat crossing a river, only to be shot and fall into the water. He was struggling to stay afloat when he genuinely awoke. The indications are that Winter did not survive the war. It struck me that his dream of the sweetheart so far away paralleled the stories of Ned and Ray Searle.

All this time, I was having doubts about whether I should actually write this book. Surrounded by my research material, I told my publisher at Random House, Meredith Curnow, that I would start by writing a hundred pages, but, if I was not happy with what I had produced, was not satisfied that I had done the right thing by my great-uncles, I would walk away from the project.

Needless to say, I did continue, although, encouraged by my publisher and editor, I did a major rewrite of the final manuscript as I realised that, if anyone was allowed to talk about the Searle boys on the most intimate terms, it was a family member. This was where historian met family biographer. To do the boys justice, I had to be honest about them. My approach was endorsed by cousin Craig Searle when we sat talking one day and he revealed that his grandfather had told him he deliberately smashed his own hand to delay his return to the front. Craig's wife, Debbie, wondered whether this should be published, but Craig unhesitatingly declared that any story about the Searle boys had to be unvarnished.

If I needed any more indications that this was a story that must

be told, it was at the 2009 Byron Bay Writers Festival. In one of the sessions where I was speaking, Melbourne historian and author Dr Michael Cathcart, who knew that I was writing *Crack Hardy*, asked me to read one of Viv Searle's poems to the audience. After setting the scene by describing how and why Viv wrote it, and explaining that this was the first time it had been read aloud since Viv had recited it to his mates in a Gallipoli trench in 1915, I read Viv's Versification. The crowd loved it.

A few days later, I led a workshop for writers. It was held at the Byron Bay RSL club. Midway through, giving my 'students' thirty minutes to write an assignment, I moved to the back of the room to sit quietly. The wall behind me was occupied by a glass display case filled with First World War memorabilia. Casually looking around, I came face to face with the artifacts and photographs of men of the 15th Battalion. Ned Searle was in the 15th Battalion. And looking back at me now with youthful eyes and high hopes were men I was writing about in *Crack Hardy*. This was like the moment with the fuzzy-wuzzies. A chill ran down my spine. Here was confirmation that, via the Searle family's lives, loves, and loss, *Crack Hardy* could be a universal story of all Australians caught up in that faraway war of 1914–18. And I knew that *Crack Hardy* was meant to be.

1914–1915: FROM PATRIOTIC FERVOUR TO RETREAT

Within days of Britain declaring war on Germany on August 4, 1914, the Australian government announced that it would enlist 20,000 men to join the mother country in the fight. On September 2, as those men were being readied to be sent by convoy to Britain, it was announced that a second contingent of 10,000 Australian volunteers would also be enlisted. Future wartime Australian prime minister, the British-born Andrew Fisher, declared that Australia would support Britain 'to the last man and the last shilling'.[1] As Europe's Western Front swiftly became a bloodbath, the British government would take Fisher at his word, asking Australia for as many as 33,000 new recruits a month. Australia's first major military engagement of the war would be in 1915 in European Turkey, on the previously unheard of Gallipoli peninsula. It was an engagement that would sear a young nation's soul.

1

TO DO, OR TO DIE

WHAT A USELESS WAY to die! Killed in the boat before your feet touched enemy soil, and without even firing a shot. Right in front of twenty-two-year-old Private Frank Vivian Searle – Viv, to his mates – one of his comrades of the 12th Battalion's A Company had sagged forward, dead.

'Well, we wanted it, now we've got it,' thought brown-haired, grey-eyed Viv with a shudder as he sat sardined in the wooden ship's boat, shoulder-to-shoulder with his mates. For weeks, he and his fellow Australians had been desperate to get off their troopship and get into the fight. But this was not what they had imagined, sitting like ducks in a shooting gallery as Turkish bullets hummed by their ears, splashed the water beside them, thudded into the woodwork, and sliced into flesh. It was just before dawn on the morning of Sunday, April 25, 1915, and Viv and his companions were making Australian history. They didn't know that at the time, and wouldn't have cared, anyway. Sweating fear and bowel-moving dread gripped them. All they thought about was surviving the landing at this place that would become known as Anzac Cove.

The Turks had started firing at Viv's company even as they clambered down the side of the British destroyer *Ribble* at 4.00 a.m., killing four Australians and one of the *Ribble*'s officers. Into a waiting rowboat, Viv and men of his platoon had squeezed,

along with five British sailors. A line had been thrown to a little Royal Navy steam launch, which set off for shore, towing Viv's boat and another just like it. Looking straight up, Viv and his silent, tensed-up mates could see the stars twinkling in the heavens above.

Many metres short of the beach, the line between launch and boat was severed, or dropped.

'Row!' the Royal Navy coxswain bellowed from the tiller as the boat began to drift. 'Row!'

Oars were slotted in place by four British sailors, who set about dragging the heavily-laden boat toward the distant gloomy shore. 'It's murderous!' a horrified Viv thought to himself, as Turkish rifle and machinegun bullets chopped the water and bit into the boat, and men near Viv cried out with pained surprise as they took a bullet. And he had no choice but to sit there, and pray he wasn't hit.

With a clunk, their craft collided with a tangle of boats that had carried other Australians shoreward just minutes ahead of them.

'Jump out and run for it!' yelled Second Lieutenant Rupert Rafferty, Viv's platoon commander, coming to his feet as he spoke.

'Yes, jump out, Australia, and make a name for yourselves,' the English coxswain called.

The Aussie soldiers needed no third telling. Over the side they went. They dropped into the cool waters of the Aegean Sea with rifles held high and with bulging packs weighing forty-five kilograms on their backs, and ammunition pouches on their chests filled with 200 rounds of .303 ammunition. Viv Searle, five feet eight inches (172 centimetres) tall and weighing 10 stone five pounds (66 kilograms), landed with a splash in water up to his waist. Behind him, Lieutenant Rafferty and the men from the stern of the boat went in up to their necks. Glancing back into the boat, Viv saw that three of his mates would not be leaving it; they lay, slumped, dead or dying, where they had been hit.

Determined not to share their fate, Viv began wading toward the beach, the desire for self-preservation driving each leaden step; he reckoned his equipment weighed a ton. Around him, enemy bullets zipped into the water with a sizzling hiss. Viv was almost offended by the fact that some anonymous bastards out there were

shooting at *him*! As he came out of the water and reached the shingle of the shore, taking his first steps onto Turkey's now sullied soil, all Viv could see in dawn's early light was what appeared to be massive sand cliffs rising 150 metres directly in front of him. When he looked up, he could see a line of continuous muzzle flashes from Turkish weapons on the summit – like a long, glittering necklace, war correspondent Charles Bean would later describe it.[2]

This was not what Viv had been led to expect. Only later would he learn that, in error, the Royal Navy had landed the Australians at the wrong place. The planned landing place would have offered a much easier entrée to Turkey; the beach where the men of the 3rd Brigade now found themselves had been rated 'impossible' for a night landing by the invasion's planners. And here were Viv and his mates, deposited at that impossible place. Battalions, companies and platoons had become crazily mixed up. Some officers had not survived the first minutes of the landing. Others were in shock and incapable of leading.

'Take cover!' one unscathed officer yelled close by Viv.

'Throw off your packs!' someone else ordered.

The struggle to be free of the water carrying their heavy loads had been exhausting. Viv ran five metres across the sand to a low sandy hummock that fringed the beach, then dropped, panting and perspiring, and lay there, 'to get a blow', in his own words. Then, putting aside his rifle, he removed and cast away his pack. He wondered if he would ever see it again. 'Goodbye, clean clothes,' he said to himself. All around him, others were similarly discarding their packs. One man slammed a five-round clip into his rifle – they had been ordered to land with rifles unloaded. Viv quickly dragged a clip from a pouch and likewise slapped it into the magazine of his Lee-Enfield, as bullets continued to fly close by overhead.

'Fix bayonets!' bellowed an unidentified officer. 'Advance!'

The higher-ups had worried that the Australian troops might accidentally injure themselves or the men around them during the landing, hence the orders to come ashore with empty rifles and not to fire them before daylight. Bayonets had remained in scabbards for the same reason. Now, Viv slid his well-ground bayonet from the sheath on his belt and slipped it into the slot beneath the rifle's barrel.

Knowing it was suicide to remain on the exposed beach, Viv pulled himself to his feet, clambered over the sandy hummock, and began to run blindly forward in a half stoop, as others around him did the same. He had lost contact with Lieutenant Rafferty and the remainder of 4 Platoon. Happy to follow any officer, and recognising Lieutenant Lawrence Burt from one of the 12th's South Australian companies, Viv threw in his lot with him.

'Forward!' yelled Burt, a twenty-five-year-old electrical engineer from Kingswood, South Australia, leading a charge up the steep incline, toward the ridge from where most Turkish fire appeared to be coming.

Bullets scythed down among the Australians. Many men fell, but the others kept going. As Viv scrambled upward on hands and knees, using the butt of his rifle for leverage here, grabbing the slope's low holly and arbutus scrub for handholds there, he spotted the 12th Battalion's adjutant, Lieutenant John Northcott. A native of Ballarat in Victoria and one of the few professional soldiers in the battalion, Northcott had propped on the incline and was directing the men crouched around him as calmly as if he were on a parade ground, ignoring the hail of enemy lead dropping all around, to his cost. Viv saw Northcott go down, grabbing at a crippling wound to the hip.

In scrambling bursts, the 12th Battalion mounted the impossible slope. Four times, Viv paused to take aim at shadowy figures and muzzle flashes on the height above, firing, working the rifle's bolt to eject the spent cartridge and ram another into the chamber, then, picking himself up again, continuing the frantic, fifteen-minute climb. He had no idea whether he actually hit anyone.

Many of those who had started the charge with Viv were not there when he reached the top of First Ridge. Viv was amazed that he had not been hit: 'They poured fire into us as fast as they could use their machineguns and rifles; then their artillery, and we got a taste of shrapnel. But we reached those hills.' On topping the hill, they found the ridge unoccupied. 'The Turks never waited for us. They rushed back and took up another position.' Viv and the Australians with him took cover along the ridge, reloaded, and caught their breath.

From here, Viv looked back down toward the water's edge. He

was on the northern end of the beach, on the left flank of the landing. In the gradually improving light he could see dead lying everywhere down below, with wounded being collected and carried or helped into cover by men of the 3rd Field Ambulance who had landed with the 12th. He also saw, away to the left, below Fisherman's Hut, four more boats crunching onto the shingle. As men of the 2nd Brigade's 7th Battalion tumbled out of these boats, they were mowed down by two Turkish machineguns and riflemen firing from a trench near the hut. Within seconds, Australian dead lay in heaps. Of 140 7th Battalion men in the boats, only thirty-five managed to land and find cover.

An admiring cry from men with Viv caused him to look around, to see his own Lieutenant Rafferty rise up several hundred metres away and lead Viv's platoon and another twenty assorted South Australians from the 11th Battalion in a crazy northward dash toward Fisherman's Hut. They went across open grassland toward the Turks responsible for cutting down the 7th Battalion men. Viv didn't know it, but Lieutenant-Colonel Lancelot Clarke, the 12th's fifty-seven-year-old commander, had ordered Rafferty to push northward and support the men who had landed at Fisherman's Hut.

'But, Colonel,' Rafferty had responded, 'my orders are different.'

'I can't help that,' Boer War veteran Clarke had impatiently retorted, before telling the lieutenant to get on with his new assignment, which Rafferty did without further comment.[3]

Turkish guns opened up on Rafferty and his men, and, as Viv watched, twenty of the running figures fell; eight of them members of Viv's platoon. Rafferty and the remainder of the party made it to the Turkish position, killing some Turks and sending the remainder fleeing. The men of 4 Platoon who had fallen in the dash were all Viv's friends. With disbelief, Viv turned his eyes away from the bodies of mates who had been talking with him just an hour before. Had things been different, he might have been one of them.

Now Viv heard Lieutenant Burt calling for his men to follow him, as he launched himself forward, toward a height on the next ridge, which would become known as Russell's Top. Viv and those with him followed. The Turks ahead abandoned their positions as

Burt's men came at them, running up the slope and over Second Ridge, with the Australians in hot pursuit and taking potshots at them. Once the chase reached the summit, Burt called a halt, withdrawing to a hollow on Russell's Top. There he paused for a breather and to reorganise the men under his command. Once he had created new sections and platoons under the few surviving sergeants and corporals, Burt would resume the advance, toward the Nek.

Viv was feeling guilty. It was as if he had abandoned his platoon. Knowing where Lieutenant Rafferty and the survivors of 4 Platoon were now, he left Burt's men and scrambled toward Rafferty's position, making a final dash over open ground to join his mates. He made it in one piece, throwing himself into cover, to find himself sharing the position with dead Turks as well as live Australians. Lieutenant Rafferty was trying, unsuccessfully, to dry the blurred lenses of his field-glasses using his shirt tail. Shirt and glasses had been soaked when he'd bailed out of the landing boat into deep water. Rafferty looked up as Viv slid in beside him, and nodded approvingly. Viv was one of the platoon's scouts, and the lieutenant was glad to have him back.

Thirty-eight-year-old, English-born Rafferty, a schoolteacher and part-time militia officer before the war, had left his wife Rose back at Sprent in northwestern Tasmania when he enlisted in the AIF the previous August. Rafferty would be commended in his service record for setting 'a high standard of hard work and devotion to duty', and, duty-driven now, Rafferty was unhappy that in all the chaos and confusion he had failed to execute his platoon's original assignment. The lieutenant called his remaining men to him. Including Viv, just thirteen men were able to answer the call. When Rafferty told them that they must fulfil their assignment, they all nodded.

That assignment was to provide protection for the 26th Battery of the Indian Mountain Artillery, known as Jacob's Battery, which was supposed to land that morning and take up a firing position on the left of the line to support the advance of the AIF's 10th and 11th Battalions. But the Indian gunners were nowhere to be seen. Rafferty's platoon would have to go looking for them. Turkish fire from the north had eased off, allowing the platoon to withdraw

toward the south. While they were searching for the Indians, Viv and his companions learned that their battalion commander, Colonel Clarke, had been shot and killed on Russell's Top by a Turkish sniper. Clarke had fallen with pencil in one hand and notebook in the other. His batman had been shot dead beside him, moments later.

Mules carrying Jacob's Battery's equipment had been landed at 8.00, but, in the confusion, the Indian gunners themselves were not put ashore until 10.30. On the beach, Rafferty's group located the Indians, resplendent in turbans and long, loose shirts. Viv was mightily impressed by them. 'They were Sikhs; big, black-bearded men, and cool hands, too.' The battery consisted of six light 'screw guns' on small metal wheels, whose crews knelt to load, aim and fire. The guns had been dismantled; their parts were loaded onto their mules. Now that the battery's elderly English commander, the Royal Artillery's Captain Henry Kirby, had his promised escort, he ordered his unit forward.

To the astonishment of Viv and his comrades, the Indians led their heavily-laden mules up the slope to First Ridge with the agility of mountain goats: 'They took them up country that we had a job crawling up ourselves.' But now came the hard part. 'As soon as we crossed the first ridge we were under fire, and remained under it all the rest of the day.' They pushed on up the scrubby slope of the Razorback, until the Indians found a level spot for their guns at the rear of 400 Plateau, just behind the crest. As the gunners unpacked their weapons and assembled them for firing, seemingly oblivious to the incoming enemy fire, Viv and his companions extended in front of the six guns in a line, lying flat on their stomachs behind what cover they could find below the crest, and prepared to beat off any Turkish attempt to rush the guns.

Viv and his platoon might have been behind the crest of the plateau, but Battleship Hill and the heights to the north all rose above them. There seemed to be thousands of Turks up there, all shooting at the Indian gunners. Turkish bullets filled the air. 'That was the hottest hour I ever put in,' Viv reckoned. 'The bullets fairly sang around us, and we had to lie there tight and do nothing. Why we were all not shot, I don't know.' The Indians set up their six little guns in two groups, with three on either side of White's

Valley. Meanwhile, Captain Kirby went scouting forward to select targets. At 11.55, the Indian guns opened fire on distant Turkish positions on the third ridge, the detonations deafening Viv and his comrades, who ducked instinctively: 'The shells went screaming over our heads.'

The Indian battery's guns were the only artillery that went into action for the landing force ashore that day. While the results of their shooting were difficult to gauge, the positive effect of their salvoes on the morale of the Australian infantrymen, who had endured heavy and continuous Turkish shelling all morning, was enormous. But the Indian artillery's rounds attracted dreadful retribution. Bullets kept kicking the dirt all around the guns and their prone Australian defenders. Soon, the Indian shells were also being answered by Turkish guns, first one battery, and then another in a different location; both eventually zeroed in on Jacob's Battery's exposed position.

'The enemy got onto us with shrapnel. Then we got what for! Shell after shell burst right over us and around the battery.' Viv and his mates hugged the ground, and prayed to somehow survive. 'Many of the Indians were hit, but by a merciful providence we were not touched.' Despite casualties among their crews, which included two seriously wounded officers, the Indian guns kept up their bombardment of Turkish positions.

The Turkish commanders were so desperate to eradicate the threat posed by the Indian guns they sent a machinegun crew crawling around to the left of Jacob's Battery. The first that Viv and his mates knew about the machinegun was the distinctive *jabber-jabber-jabber* of the German-made Maxim gun not far to their left. Viv had thought things couldn't get any worse, but they had: 'The air was simply alive with lead.' Bullets tore up the earth behind Viv and his comrades. His platoon sergeant, Archer Skinner, a twenty-four-year-old stationer from Ulverstone in Tasmania, let out a cry, and clutched at his boot; a machinegun bullet had hit him in the heel. Seeing that, while painful, his wound was far from fatal, Skinner wheeled around, and, on his stomach still, began returning fire with his rifle. His men followed suit.

Lieutenant Rafferty, deciding that their position had become simply too hot to be tenable, yelled above the din of battle to Sergeant Skinner, instructing him to take charge of the platoon.

'I'm going forward to see if I can find us a better position,' Rafferty told him, sounding perfectly calm and businesslike.

Skinner nodded grimly, hiding the pain from his wound, and he and Viv watched the lieutenant slither away, toward the Turks, and disappear from sight. The Indian guns kept booming right behind them. Turkish bullets kept coming from in front and the left. Shells kept exploding overhead. Then a shell burst directly in front of Viv, and in the same instant something pounded into his left shoulder, taking his breath away. It left him with no feeling in the shoulder or his arm. To him, 'it felt as if it were blown off.'

'Sergeant!' Viv bellowed. 'I've been hit. Can I go back?'

Skinner looked at him for a moment, saw the tattered hole in his tunic where shrapnel had hit Viv's shoulder, then nodded. 'Yes, go back. But leave your ammunition.'

With difficulty, Viv stripped off his ammunition belts, using just his right hand, and handed them to the nearest man. Then he began to slither away, slowly, but gratefully, toward the beach, and medical attention, taking his rifle with him. His left arm hung limply, and his head swam with fears, regrets, and disbelief. This day had not gone as he or his mates had thought it would. Nothing like it.

Seven months earlier, when he had enlisted in the AIF, Viv had been told that he would be going to Britain, to strengthen forts there. Back then, had anyone told him he would be participating in the invasion of the homeland of the Muslim Turk, he would have declared them crazy. And, his elder brother Ned, a private with the 15th Battalion, was also due to join this chaotic landing on this god-forsaken Gallipoli peninsula today, right behind the 12th. The boys' baby brother Ray had enlisted, too. But what had possessed the three of them to volunteer, to willingly come half way across the world and throw themselves into this hell on earth?