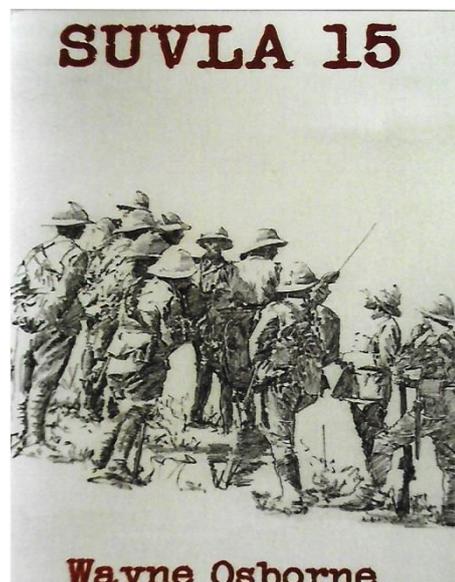


BOOK REVIEW

Suvla 15 by Wayne Osborne. Published in 2015 by Salient Books (Paper Back) 195 Pages. ISBN 978 0 9574459 5 6. Price £9.99p

A very good and interesting book about the Yeomanry Regiment's of the 2nd Mounted Division's involvement in the struggle to capture Scimitar Hill and the W Hills at Suvla Gallipoli, on the 21st-22nd August 1915. The author has sourced archival documents, books, newspapers, personal diaries and other material about the Yeomanry who fought at Suvla. To introduce the reader to the circumstances which led to the deployment of the Yeomanry Regiments going to Gallipoli he has concentrated on the experiences of the of the 1st/3rd County of London Yeomanry Regiment (Sharpshooters Hussars) and the



diary of their commanding officer Colonel Sir Alexander Weston Jarvis CMG, MVO, TD. He was a Member of Parliament for six years and joined the Volunteer Corps as 2nd Lieutenant. Having commercial interests in South Africa he served with Herbert Plumer to quell the Matabele Rebellion. During the Boer War he commanded the 21st Imperial Yeomanry as a Lieutenant Colonel and in 1902 he assumed command of the 1st/3rd County Of London Yeomanry, an appointment he held until 1916.

A fascinating aspect of this book in the day-to-day detail the author has gleaned of the life of the Yeomanry soldier both prior to and during the war. In the early summer of 1914 soldiers of the Territorial Army were enjoying their annual summer camp, and the 1st/3rd County of London Yeomanry was no exception. War clouds were gathering and many were keen, if war broke out to 'have a go' at the enemy. Realisation of their ambition appeared to be fulfilled when orders were received to mobilise, but their enthusiasm was dampened when they became aware that their duty would be at home. Lieutenant-Colonel Jarvis addressed his men, reminding them of their duty to King and Country in times of war. Expecting they would all volunteer if called upon to serve overseas he was profoundly shocked when one third of his troops declined, exercising their right as Territorials, to serve at home. Although the country was committed to war the Army was understrength in man power and it was vital to increase numbers. Thousands were to answer Kitchener's call to serve and fight for their country. In

this way the Yeomanry regiments and other units were brought up to strength for home and overseas service. In the early autumn of 1914 the 1st/3rd County of London Regiment were camped at Wallingford and then deployed to Norfolk in November for coastal protection and defence duties.

The political machinations which led to the Dardanelles and Gallipoli campaign to 'knock Turkey out of the war' raised the hopes of Lieutenant-Colonel Jarvis and his fellow Yeoman for overseas service when on the 4th April, 1915 orders were received to leave Norfolk and prepare for embarkation. The 1st/3rd County of London Yeomanry were part of the 4th (London) Mounted Brigade, 2nd Mounted Division, and embarked from Avonmouth on the 16th April for the Middle East. Lieutenant-Colonel Jarvis was on the S.S. Cuthbert, a former cattle boat and he noted in his diary that the ship was 'in a filthy state' and employed his men in 'tidying and cleaning things up'. The Allies landed on the Gallipoli peninsula on the 25th April and two days later the S.S. Cuthbert docked at Alexandria.

On the 1st August orders were issued to the 2nd Mounted Division to embark for Gallipoli where they would fight as infantrymen. The mounted troopers were disappointed with this news and morale was further depressed when the orders were cancelled two days later without any explanation. They were to remain in Egypt. Then on the 10th August the decision was reversed and the Division would after all go to Gallipoli. They departed from Alexandria on the 14th and arrived at the island of Lemnos three days later and briefly anchored in Mudros Bay. After a senior officer's briefing Lieutenant-Colonel Jarvis noted that the situation was "none too rosy" on Gallipoli. Without going into detail of their deployment and subsequent fighting for Scimitar and the W Hills – which the author fully describes in this book – the 4th Mounted Brigade were transported to Suvla on HMS Doris, landed during the night of the 17th and morning of the 18th August and bivouacked at Ghazi Baba.

Despite the gallant attempt to capture the high ground overlooking Suvla the operation on the 21st-22nd August was unsuccessful. Over the following weeks the Division endured tours in the trenches and fatigue duties. Sickness and disease claimed more of their lives than the fighting did. Eventually they were withdrawn and left the peninsula in November 1915 and returned to Egypt. This book is a compact account of the actions of the 2nd Mounted Division at Suvla. Extracts from personal diaries of the Yeoman, make it clear that Suvla, was for many their first experience of war. This modestly priced book about the events at Suvla in August 1915 is a welcome addition about the Yeomanry's participation in a fateful and costly campaign.

R.G. Coleman