

Gallipoli - Dardanelles Campaign

25th April 1915 - 9th January 1916 : *1st Battalion of the Essex Regiment*

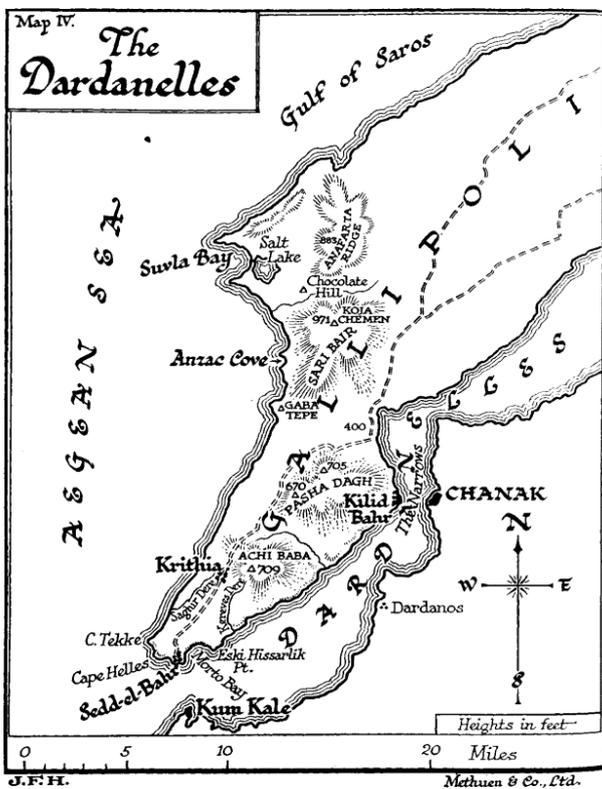
(William) Stanley Souter

Amos Garrad

(Orman) Alfred Henry Lankester

Lewis Richard Day

The Gallipoli peninsula sits on the north western side of the Dardanelles strait, a narrow sea route running from the Mediterranean through Constantinople (now Istanbul) into the Black Sea and Russia; at that time allied with Britain. Using attacks by naval forces directed by Churchill (then first Lord of the Admiralty) and an amphibious landing of troops, the aim was to capture the peninsula, then the Ottoman capital Constantinople and open up a route to help support Russian forces fighting on the eastern front.



The 1st Battalion of the Essex Regiment was sent to fight and stayed throughout this eight month campaign before the attempt was given up and forces withdrawn. This is the story of four local young men who joined the regiment and whose lives were cut short, far from home fighting Turks of the Ottoman Empire.

The youngest of the four **(William) Stanley Souter** was born in Mistley in early 1896. His family came originally from Suffolk where his father James and uncles were active Bell ringers, regularly ringing the bells in the Church at Stowmarket. His older brother (James) Fredrick

Souter was born just before the family moved to Cross Road, Mistley (now known as Clacton Road, Horsley Cross Street). His father was a farm worker and started ringing at Little Bentley and Ardleigh in 1892 before switching to the new bells at Mistley Church at the turn of the century, leading some of the major occasions. Frederick and later **Stanley** learnt the art as soon as they were old enough and were soon ringing in some of the long peals. Frederick's first 720 change ring 'Cambridge' on the Mistley bells came when he was only 14 years old. **Stanley** at about the same age in 1910 helped mark the induction of a new vicar at the church alongside other service men such as John Tippins and Harry Saunders, who also died in the war.

The family lived at Cross Road through 1911 with father James and older brother Frederick both working as horsemen, most likely as part of a ploughing team. **Stanley** at only 14 years old started work as a general farm hand. His mother Eliza Prentice came originally from Needham Market in Suffolk.

Along with a number of other local bell ringers, father and both brothers all seem to have signed up with the Essex regiment. **Stanley** joined up in Colchester in early June 1913, initially with the 3rd special reserve battalion, then at some point transferred as a regular to the 1st Battalion (3/1937).

Walter **Garrad** moved his large family of seven children from rural Lt Bromley, to Mill Lane, Manningtree in order to switch from farm work to Free's maltings, where even as a Labourer he would have been better paid. His son **Amos** continued as a farm Stockman, whilst his younger son Frederick found work at the bakers shop in Manningtree, delivering bread around the town. By 1911 Walter had lost his wife Elizabeth and needed the support of Minnie Barkway a live-in housekeeper to bring up the four children still at home, including William aged 12 and Jack aged 10 yrs. At least three of his sons signed up for the war, two never came back. Frederick Garrad had already served time in the army, signing up just after his 18th birthday in April 1913 with the Essex Regiment and as part of the reserve army was one of the first to be called up and sent to France being transferred to the 1st Battalion of the Cheshire Regiment. He landed on the 16th August

1914 and at only 20 years of age was killed just a few days later as part of the battle of Mons. Walter was the eldest of the three sons and also served in the Cheshire regiment alongside his younger brother, but survived the war. **Amos Garrad**, the middle brother, enlisted into the regular army at Harwich, joining the 1st Battalion of the Essex regiment as Private (9803) around 1911/12.

Lewis Richard Day's father Richard came originally from Sheppey, Kent, at one time serving with the Navy, later working as a Ships Steward. Lewis's mother was Harriet Robinson, born in Lawford and living for a while in Pond Corner (now the town fountain). Harriet worked for a time as a servant girl in South Street, while her father and brother were also seaman, which may have been how she met Richard. The couple married in 1887 and started out in Portsmouth before moving to Cattawade, then Manningtree where Lewis was born in 1893. Something happened to his mother as by the turn of the century her sister Mary Anne Robinson had moved in with the household and started her own family with them back in Portsmouth.

Lewis joined the Army, enlisting in Manningtree with the 1st Battalion of the Essex Regiment as Private 9592, by 1911 he is resident at the Warley Barracks where he would have completed his training.

Orman Alfred Henry Lankester was born in Wix in 1892 and despite his grand name his father Alfred was at that time a licensed Hawker. Alfred was a bit confused about where he was born, but it is likely to have been Henny, further up the Stour River. When Alfred was seven years old his parents were doing well and running the Wherry Inn in Manningtree. They later moved into the High street and possibly ran a shop where Alfred was an assistant in 1881. He met Sarah Orman from Manningtree and they married in 1887 moving to Bradfield Road in Wix where they lived with Sarah's 64 year old father Benjamin Orman, a retired farmer originally from Bramford, Suffolk whose wife had died some years earlier. At one time he had lived and worked in South Hill Manningtree as a Farm Bailiff.

The couple's first child then took his mother's surname as a Christian name (Orman) and his second name (Alfred) after his father.

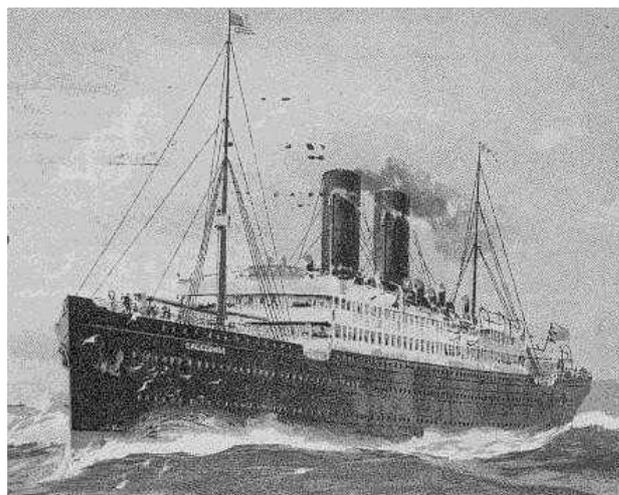
The family then moved to Mill House in Wix and by 1901 Orman (then aged 8) has a sister Agnes (Anna) Maud (aged 4) and a brother Percy (aged 1). His grandfather, Benjamin Orman is still living with them, his older brother having a son William

Fredrick Orman, who also died in the war in 1916 and is listed on the Manningtree Memorial.

Orman Alfred joined the Essex regiment in about June 1908, enlisting in Warley near Brentwood where he would have received his basic training. By 1911 his army career had taken him to India as part of the 1st Battalion, where he is listed on the census return as a private 20 years of age, calling himself **Alfred**. He later progressed to the rank of Corporal, 9230. By this time his family had moved to Drake House, The Street, Bradfield, with his father Alfred working as a Malsters Labourer.

Between 1902 and 1914 the 1st Battalion of the Essex regiment served in India and Burma and by August 1914 were stationed in the middle of the India Ocean at the garrison in Mauritius. Once a territorial force arrived to take over, the Battalion hurriedly returned to Britain, arriving in time for Christmas which they spent close by on defence duties at Harwich. This would have given time for Orman to visit his family after an absence of some years and for Stanley Soultter to switch over from the reserves.

On the 18th of January 1915 the Battalion moved to Banbury to join the 88th Brigade of the 29th Division. The original intention was for them to be trained up and sent to the Western Front. Instead after a brief period in Warwick, on the 21st March they set sail from Avonmouth near Bristol on the ocean liner SS Caledonia commandeered for troop transport and after as a Hospital ship (it was later sunk in the Mediterranean by a German Submarine).



The Battalion travelled first to Alexandria, arriving in Egypt on the 2nd April. Their next stop was the small port village of Mudros on the Greek Island of Limnos which they made on the 13th, joining the 78,000 strong Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. This included forces from the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC).

A number of practice landings took place and there were four weeks of delay before the whole force was organised ready for the assault, which was then postponed due to bad weather. This gave the Ottoman and German led forces time to prepare considerable defences before the landings eventually took place on six separate beaches on the 25th April, later known as ANZAC day.

Without modern craft, the men were sent ashore in no more than open rowing boats, with losses predicted as anything up to three quarters. The Essex Regiment's amphibious landing on 'W' beach was led by Lt Col Godfrey Faussett and took place under heavy fire at Cape Helles, located on the tip of Gallipoli.



The well defended section of beach had already taken a heavy toll of the Lancashire Fusiliers who had suffered 700 killed or wounded since their assault at 6.00 am. Having secured a foot hold on the beach by about 2.00 pm, the Essex Battalion then attacked Hill 138 which was taken by 5.20 pm that afternoon before they dug in, seeing off counter attacks during the night. By then there were 18 dead and 90 wounded.



1st battalion Gallipoli 25 April 1915.

All four men local men survived the landing and a number of battles and counter attacks in early May as both sides settled into a local form of trench warfare amongst the rocky outcrops. Lt

Colonel Fausset was killed on the 2nd May leading a small assault.

Throughout the rest of the month further attacks were made on 'Fir Tree Wood', one of four heavily defended spurs separated by deep gullies, which took a great toll on the Battalion before it was eventually taken by an attack on the 18th May.

As on the western front there was continual shelling and sniper activity, with 19 year old **William Stanley Souter** being the first of the four local men to be killed in action on the 30th May. Further attacks took place on the 4th June in a sector know as 'Twelve Tree Copse' where, with heavy losses some ground was made only to be lost on the 6th June when a surprise counter attack came from the rear. In stiff and confused fighting, 'Y' company, some 90 strong, held on to the last, with only 25 of them making it back.

Amos Garrad was one of those who died of his wounds that day at just 21 years of age. By then only four officers out of the 25 that left England were still on active duty.

Lewis Day also survived numerous minor battles until in the late afternoon on Thursday the 18th June there was an unexpected attack. At great cost the Turks managed to take one trench, but were driven off by nightfall. One of the casualties was Lewis, killed in action, aged 22 years.



The Battle of **Krithia Vineyard** was originally intended as a minor divisionary action as part of an August offensive whose aim was an amphibious landing at Suvla bay on the north west of the peninsula, intended to out-flank the Ottoman forces.

Due to the shortage of artillery, the attack was split into two phases with the 1st Essex, as part of the 88th Brigade, attacking first on the afternoon of 6th August. They faced four Ottoman divisions, three of which were fresh, with two more in reserve, secretly assembled in preparation for the Turks' own offensive. The Essex Battalion 'forced

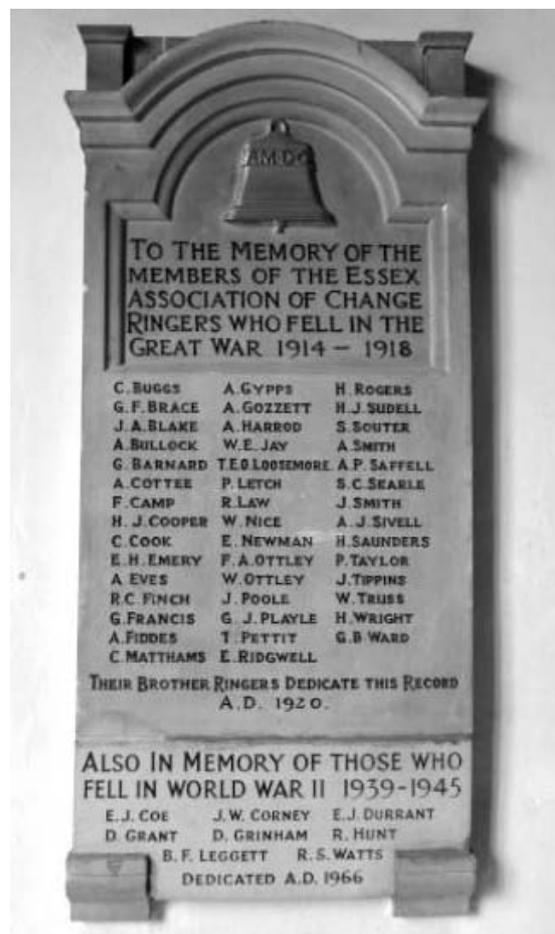
their way into the crowded enemy trench opposite them, despite the most determined resistance, but, once in, were subjected to the heaviest musketry fire from both flanks, as well as in reverse, and were shattered by showers of bombs. Two separate resolute attacks were made ...but both of them recoiled in face of the unexpected volume of fire developed by the Turks.' By nightfall all the gains had been taken back and given the heavy losses the 88th Brigade was effectively destroyed as a fighting force. Of the thousands of casualties, from the Essex regiment alone 180 were missing, 202 wounded and 50 killed, including 23 year old Corporal **(Orman) Alfred Henry Lankester** who died fighting as part of 'W' Company.

By December 1915 with the stalemate finally recognised, the attempt to take Gallipoli was abandoned and evacuation of the army began. The 1st Essex Battalion one of the last to leave.



'W' Beachhead.

Of the 883 men who landed with the battalion in April 1915, nine months later only 375 were left. Captain George P Cox, only 22 years old, was killed by an aerial bomb on Christmas Eve, the last officer remaining from the April landing. **Stanley Souter** has no known grave and is commemorated on the Helles Memorial, Turkey.



He is also on the Roll of Honour in Chelmsford Cathedral to those change ringers who died. His Father James was paid a war gratuity of £4 in October 1915 and a further £3 in August 1919. His brother Fredrick Souter served on the western front with the 2nd Essex Battalion and survived the war. He continued his army career through to the Second World War, marrying and settling down in Prittlewell near Southend where he carried on ringing the local church bells and playing a role with the Essex Association of Change Ringers, before passing away in 1953.

Amos Garrad is also commemorated on the Helles Memorial.

The body of **Lewis Day** was recovered and taken for burial in Egypt at the Alexandria Military cemetery. His father applied for his medals in October 1919 by which time he was living in Uxbridge.



(Orman) Alfred Lankester has no known grave and is also listed on the Helles Memorial. By the time he was killed his parents had moved to 3 Rigby Road, Mistley and were later given a War gratuity of £6.10 shillings.

Other local men playing a part in this campaign were **James Spencer Driver** who joined the 1st Essex and arrived at the same time as the 5th Essex Battalion on the 9th August 1915. James was later killed on the Somme in 1917. Also arriving with the 5th Battalion were Major **John Maxwell Heron, Wilfred Ainger & Ernest William Carr**. They survived this encounter with the Turks but died later in the battle for Gaza in March 1917.

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