

## Chief of Navy – Call to Remembrance Dawn Service

- For the first to land on Gallipoli in the early hours of 25 April 1915, the tension aboard the small boats which brought them to shore was palpable.
- For many, it would be their first experience of war. William Turnley, eloquently described this feeling:

*“The suspense is nerve-racking. All we can do is follow the pinnacle towing us about. The thought comes to me that perhaps we are the unfortunate ones to be sacrificed in drawing the enemy’s fire. Such a cheerful thought!*

*...Oh why the dickens don’t they fire at us! There are a couple of lights flashing about —they must have seen us...*

*Crack! Swish! Ping! At last we breathe a sigh of relief, the suspense is over ... some get ashore safely, some are hit slightly, others are drowned in only a couple of feet of water because in the excitement no one notices their plight...*

*One fellow remains in the boat after all the others have disembarked  
... he...looks at us dazedly, leaning forward on his rifle. A sailor  
...touches him on the arm, and the soldier falls forward in to the  
bottom of the boat, dead.”*

- Once ashore men rushed on hands and knees up the steep cliffs to the ridges above us. They reached the heights quickly and “stood triumphantly 300 feet above the beach.” They would soon face a strong counter-attack by Turkish forces.
- This first battle for the heights, which has come to be known as the battle of the landing, would last until early May. Those who survived these early days would see many other battles and many more of their mates fall.
- Those who lived, lived through the heat and horror of summer and the August offensive, the flies and illness which plagued the Peninsula and were exposed to storms and snow as the freezing Turkish winter descended whilst preparations were made for the December evacuation.

- The voices of those who served here are now silent. We are the caretakers of their memories. Today, we will walk their battlefield and carry their stories in our hearts.

Source: Bill Gammage, *The Broken Years*, Penguin: Ringwood, Victoria, 1974.