



COOKS HILL

LIFE SAVING & SURF CLUB

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Tel: (02) 4925 2828
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Gallipoli 100 Surf Boat Marathon – April 2015

Six members of the Cooks Hill LS & SC surfboat rowing fraternity participated in The Gallipoli 100 (G100) surfboat marathon. Allan McKeown (stroke), Iain 'Buster' Byrnes (2nd stroke), Michael Eager (2nd bow), Gavin 'Camel' Leigh (bow), 'Lucky' Phillip Garroway (sweep/rower) and Mitchell Hermens (sweep/rower) had the privilege to take part in the G100, a 60km surfboat marathon featuring surfboats manned by Australian, New Zealand and Turkish crews held on 21 and 22 April 2015 from Eceabat (Çanakkale) to North Beach (Ariburnu) 100 years since the landings at ANZAC Cove. The course rowed around the Gallipoli Peninsula passing every major landing point of the WW1 conflict. The Cooks Hill crew completed the marathon in parallel with a crew from Avoca.

Day 1 began with rigging and setting up the boats on Eceabat Beach, a beach barely bigger than the Cooks Hill patrol deck. Conditions were windy and drizzly for the first leg of the row but improved at the first changeover point. With sunshine, slight chop and historic scenery all around the Cooks Hill crew moved through the pack to be in the top 10 as they landed at Morto Bay and finished the first day.

Day 2 started in trying conditions with but soon improved for the landing at ANZAC Cove. The rain was coming down but the spirits of the group were high. Cooks Hill/Avoca headed out and after a few crew changes crossed the finish line on Brighton (V) beach in 3rd. From here all crews rowed past the beach cemetery and took part in the oars up boaties salute off ANZAC Cove. It was an unbelievable experience to be standing in the exact spot where the Australian armed forces landed 100 years ago. Some pipers played the Last Post, everyone sang along as they played Waltzing Matilda and it was a moving experience to hear The Ode spoken on the shores of Gallipoli.

ANZAC day was commemorated with a very special dawn service at the small town of Gelibolu (Gallipoli). A re-enactment of the landings at ANZAC Cove took place with over 25 surfboats rowing to shore in the wee hours of the morning. It was an eerie situation to see silhouettes of the boats out at sea, the temperature only 5-10°C, hearing the faint sound of the last post before they set off in waves and emerged from the darkness to land on the small beach we were standing on. At the end of the service five of the boats were donated to the town to continue training and hopefully competing in surf boat races.

Following the service most returned to the ship to enjoy some two-up on the deck. There was a great feeling of camaraderie throughout the group as we taught the Turkish rowers the rules of two-up, shared stories (and blisters on hands) of the marathon, spoke to current and ex-servicemen and explained to the Turks a



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classic surf boat carnival. The camaraderie between everyone on the tour was excellent with members from different clubs over Australia willing to lend a hand when needed.

The members of the Cooks Hill party are very grateful to have participated in this once in a lifetime opportunity. A huge thank you to the Sponsors New England Trading, Newcastle City Yacht Club, The Squires Maiden, Silo, Nagisa, The Landing, Bellini's Bar and Restaurant, the Junction Tavern, First Creek Wines, Bar Petite, Chevils Broadmeadow, Denton Engineering, The Carlin Family and everyone who bought a raffle ticket for making the event possible.

Phil Garroway