

# The History of the Twentieth Century

## Episode 110

### “The Shell Shortage”

#### Transcript

[music: Fanfare]

When the Great War began, the Liberal Government in the United Kingdom had begun it with broad public support, and the Liberals intended to carry on in wartime just as they had in peacetime, with the same government, the same ministers, the same leadership.

But after eight months of war, eight months that brought no victory, brought the Allies seemingly no closer to victory, and during which the British Army’s contributions seemed embarrassingly slight, public discontent with the war effort grew, and that discontent increasingly focused on the Liberals in Whitehall.

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

[music: Opening War Theme]

Episode 110. The Shell Shortage.

Lord Northcliffe was born Alfred Harmsworth in Dublin in 1865, the son of a barrister. After school, he became a freelance journalist and had quite a knack for it. In 1887, at the age of 22, he founded his first magazine, called simply *Answers to Correspondents*, and later and even more simply, *Answers*. The principle of this periodical was that readers would mail in questions they wanted answered, and the magazine would answer them. Questions like, How many Members of Parliament have glass eyes? (Three.) or, How tall is William Gladstone? (5’9”, about three inches taller than the average British man of that time.) Northcliffe would later joke that he owed his success to a native talent for unearthing useless information.

It would be more accurate to say that he owed his success to a native talent for sensing what working-class people wanted to read about in newspapers and magazines and a lack of inhibition against providing it. His younger brother Harold had good business sense, so he went to work for his big brother, managing the business end of his publications, and together the two would revolutionize British journalism, not necessarily in a good way, and they would become tremendously wealthy doing it. They purchased the ailing *Evening News* in 1894, turned it

around, then formed a newspaper in Edinburgh, but their greatest success was *The Daily Mail*, which they founded in 1896.

With education expanding in Britain and the price of newspapers falling, a whole new market of newspaper and magazine readers was emerging who weren't satisfied with *The Times*. The secret of *The Daily Mail*, as Northcliffe himself would later explain, was that crime stories were the sort of news the public was most interested in. "They attract attention, which is the secret of newspaper success. They are the sort of dramatic news the public always affects to criticize but is always in the greatest hurry to read. Watch the sales during a big murder mystery, especially if there is a woman in it."

Besides reporting on newsworthy events, Northcliffe pioneered what he called "talking points," by which he meant raising a controversy in order to generate debate. Was whole wheat bread healthier than white bread? Were bathing costumes getting too scandalous? Should skirts be short or long? *The Daily Mail* would print pieces arguing both sides of the question which would stimulate both public discussion and newspaper sales.

This sort of intensive coverage of issues the other newspapers thought were beneath them—including, it must be said, coverage of issues primarily of interest to women—made the Harmsworth brothers and their publishing company a fortune. They had invented tabloid journalism, and their publishing company, Amalgamated Press, would become the biggest publishing house in the world.

They founded another paper, *The Daily Mirror*, in 1903. This one was pitched more toward the middle class and toward women readers—in its early days it billed itself as "a paper for men and women." In 1905 the brothers bought the *Observer*, saving that paper from financial collapse, and it must have been particularly satisfying for them to similarly rescue *The Times* from extinction in 1908. Lord Northcliffe now controlled not only what the working-class masses read, but also the middle class, and at last the very newspaper that the elites who so disdained him read. By the time the Great War broke out, an estimated 40% of the newspaper-reading public in Great Britain was reading one of Lord Northcliffe's newspapers. In an era before the internet, before television, before radio, when newspapers and magazines were your window to the world, that was a tremendous amount of clout.

In the early years of the twentieth century, Northcliffe's newspapers were a loud voice of right-wing British nationalism and they were deeply hostile to Germany. So hostile were his papers that a rival newspaper would later argue that "Lord Northcliffe has done more than any living man to bring about the war," with the sole exception of Kaiser Wilhelm. That was perhaps overstating it, but Northcliffe was a great promoter of the invasion fears of the time. He commissioned that William Le Queux novel, *The Invasion of 1910* in 1906, which we talked about back in episode 2 and ran it as a serial in the *Daily Mail*, and then promoted it by dressing

men as German soldiers, complete with *Pickelhauben*, those helmets with points at the top, and sending them out onto the streets of London.

A recurring refrain in that book is, “they should have listened to Lord Roberts,” the hero of the Boer War, episode 12, who in his retirement had become an advocate for conscription. (Recall that Britain was the only major power in Europe with no military conscription.) Not coincidentally, Lord Roberts also consulted with Le Queux when he wrote the book. Lord Roberts, incidentally, passed away in November 1914 at the age of 82. He was in France at the time, reviewing the Indian soldiers who had been brought to Europe to fight in the trenches, and he succumbed to pneumonia.

And you’ll recall that it was Lord Northcliffe who offered an aviation prize of £1000 for the first aviator to fly an airplane across the English Channel so his newspaper could declare that “England is no longer an island,” episode 72, which was of a piece with his campaign to arm Britain against Germany.

So you might have thought that when Northcliffe finally got his wish in August 1914, when Britain declared war on Germany, he’d have been a happy man. He was not. Northcliffe’s newspapers continued to criticize the Liberal Government for its prosecution of the war. They went after the First Sea Lord, Prince Louis of Battenberg, for basically being too German to be allowed to command the Royal Navy, which led to his resignation in October 1914, episode 106.

By this time, it had become clear to all that the war was not going to be the brief, decisive affair many had anticipated and was in fact degenerating on the Western Front into a grinding stalemate. Northcliffe began directing his journalistic ire at the War Minister, Lord Kitchener.

Kitchener had taken over as war minister at the beginning of the war, you’ll recall, in a rare case of a British Cabinet member who was not also an MP. Kitchener was given the job because of his wide military experience and the fact that he was the most senior active duty officer in the army. You’ll recall that Kitchener predicted a long war and laid plans for recruitment of a 70-division British Army, ten times its size at the beginning of the war, as well as mass purchases of arms and ammunition.

In our day, with the benefit of hindsight, Kitchener looks very wise. But in 1914, most were expecting a short war, and Kitchener’s view, well, it sounded a little crazy. Even after the war failed to end in 1914 and after the winter lull, there were still many who hoped the war would reach a decisive conclusion in the spring of 1915, as soon as the weather turned favorable. Kitchener, meanwhile, was giving out long-term armament contracts and refusing to release the newly forming British Army units for deployment on the Continent. He believed it was in the British national interest to hold the army in reserve until the Continental powers exhausted themselves, then release them to swoop in with the decisive blow, say sometime in 1917.

Kitchener also was relying on recruitment to build his new army, and eschewed conscription. His stern face, complete with exaggerated mustache and accusing finger, adorned the most famous military recruitment poster in history, the well-known “Lord Kitchener Wants YOU” poster. You can find an example of it on the website, [historyofthetwentiethcentury.com](http://historyofthetwentiethcentury.com). It was of course the inspiration for the later American recruitment poster that declares, “Uncle Sam wants you.”

Lord Kitchener and the Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, benefited from an outpouring of support and calls for national unity in the early days of the war. But by spring of 1915, discontent was brewing among some British, like Northcliffe. And also Field Marshal Sir John French, the commander-in-chief of the BEF in France. French was unhappy with the way he’d been treated by Kitchener in the early months of the war, and by spring of 1915, he was in touch with Northcliffe about it. Sir John believed that, with the Germans stripping their garrisons on the Western Front and redeploying them eastward to put pressure on the Russians, as we have seen, now was the time to go on the offensive and that 1915 could mean the end of the war, except for Kitchener and his foot-dragging talk about waiting two more years before deploying the new army to France.

And then there’s the Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith. Northcliffe’s attacks on the leadership of Lord Kitchener as War Minister should be seen as being veiled attacks on Asquith, who began the war with a lot of public goodwill. But that wouldn’t last.

Recall that the Liberal Party had roared back to power with a convincing election win in 1906, then survived two general elections in 1910, with reduced numbers. Asquith has been PM since April 1908, so April of 1915 marked his seventh anniversary in the office. His peacetime tenure had seen new programs and reforms as sweeping as anything American Progressives like Theodore Roosevelt or Woodrow Wilson had gotten done. But he was not what you would call a strong leader. He was a mediator, a compromiser, a broker between Cabinet factions. Ministers like Sir Edward Grey, David Lloyd George, Winston Churchill and Lord Kitchener, they got things done. Asquith settled the squabbles among them.

A man who had known poverty in his youth, Asquith relished the good life and allowed himself a generous measure of leisure time. He was an avid reader of literature, poetry, and the classics. Like his Foreign Secretary, he made it a point to spend weekends in the country, even during the war. He was a skilled and passionate bridge player. He also drank quite a bit. Among the British this is seldom regarded as a fault, or even particularly unusual, but Asquith was getting soused so regularly it raised eyebrows even in Whitehall. They called him “Squiff” or “Squiffy,” a play on his name and on a British slang term that means “tipsy.” By the way, no one seems to know where the term “squiffy” comes from, only that it first appeared in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, which was just when Asquith was becoming a prominent figure in the Liberal Party, which makes me wonder whether the term actually began as a nickname for Herbert Asquith and acquired the connotation of drunkenness from him.

Asquith also enjoyed the company of ladies. He had many women friends; how many of these relationships were romantic has to be left to speculation, but in 1912, he became intensely involved with Venetia Stanley, an aristocrat and socialite 35 years his junior. He had gone on a holiday trip to Sicily along with his daughter Violet and Edwin Montagu, an up-and-coming Liberal MP. Violet was friends with the then 24-year old Venetia and invited her along. Apparently, both Asquith and Montagu took a romantic interest in Venetia during this trip.

Asquith would write Venetia nearly six hundred letters over the next three years, sometimes as many as four a day. It reminds me of General Conrad's strange obsession with his girlfriend Gina, but at least Conrad had the excuse of being a widower. Asquith's second wife, Margot, is still very much alive at this time and would in fact outlive him. It seems that the two of them had what we in our time would call an open marriage. In his letters, Asquith writes not only about personal matters, but he discusses British politics and shares Cabinet gossip with Venetia in some detail as well as soliciting her advice. In our time, these letters are a key primary source for understanding the inner workings of the British government of this time.

Herbert Asquith's little foibles could be overlooked in peacetime, but what about in time of war, particularly a war as huge and bloody as the Great War was becoming? If the whole nation had to dedicate itself to winning the war, um, shouldn't that apply to the PM as well? But this prime minister seemed determined not to allow the war to change anything in his private life. There's a famous moment recorded between Asquith and the British comic actress known as Lady Tree in the spring of 1915. Apparently she had roped him into going on about his hobbies and interests and such for a while, and then let loose with a zinger, asking him archly, "Tell me, Mr. Asquith, do you take an interest in the war?"

[music: *Skizze*]

Aside from questions of Asquith's personal life, some called for a national unity government to lead Britain during the Great War, in a manner similar to the French *union sacrée*, or sacred union, the coalition of all political parties that had been created in that country under Prime Minister Viviani after the war broke out. Something like that had been tried once before, during the Napoleonic Wars, not especially successfully. Generally speaking, in the United Kingdom, with its first-past-the-post voting system, one party typically gets a majority, or at worst, forms a coalition with one smaller party to form a majority. This is different from fractious France, where the Chamber of Deputies typically has a half-dozen or so parties jockeying to be part of the government. Despite the outbreak of the Great War, though, Asquith was quite content to keep the Liberal Government operating on the same terms as before, with the Conservatives safely quarantined on the Opposition benches where they could heckle, but do no more harm than that.

But by the spring of 1915, a series of events took place that chipped away at Asquith's political support, making it impossible for him to carry on as he had done. It began, perhaps, with the

Battle of Neuve Chapelle in March. That had been the first British attempt to go on offense and punch through the German trench line, and although it enjoyed some success and provided the British Army with valuable experience in this new form of warfare, it had failed in its strategic objective of forcing a German withdrawal from the city of Lille.

Sir John French, commander of the British Expeditionary Force in France had really believed in the Neuve Chapelle offensive. He thought he was going to break the German line. He also believed that the Germans were on the brink of collapse and that Kitchener's reluctance to send more units to the Western Front at once was needlessly prolonging the war. These ideas were perhaps not very reasonable, but there they were. He didn't get on with Marshal Joffre, the French commander, either. Joffre would complain to Kitchener about Sir John's uncooperative attitude and Kitchener would forward these complaints to French along with a few of his own. Sir John was livid when he first heard of the plans for the upcoming Gallipoli landings, which he saw as needlessly dividing British forces when they could be put to better use in France.

And then there was the shell shortage. French had wanted to renew the Neuve Chapelle offensive in late March, but he couldn't for lack of shells. Now, we've talked about this problem here on the podcast from the beginning. By 1915, artillery guns could fire as quickly as once every four seconds. A battery of four guns can therefore fire once every second. There's just no way you can supply shells to your battery at the rate of one per second, certainly not in an army that still relies on horse-drawn wagons to deliver them.

This was a problem facing every army in the Great War, but by 1915 on the Western Front, the combatants were building rail lines directly to their artillery positions. It was now possible to load artillery shells right from the loading dock of a munitions factory in France or Germany onto a rail car, then deliver that rail car directly to the guns that would fire the shells. This eliminated the transport bottleneck, but the factories themselves were not producing enough munitions to keep up with the demand. This led to quotas; artillery guns were limited in the number of shells they could fire per hour or per day. Artillery had to be stockpiled before a big battle, and if it turned out the circumstances of the battle required more shells than had been planned for, well, there was nothing that could be done.

French began blaming the BEF's inability to break the German lines on this shortage of shells in general, and of high explosive shells in particular. The argument went like this: In this new sort of war against soldiers heavily entrenched, bombardment with high explosive shells is necessary to reduce their defenses. Kitchener had not only failed to send enough shells, he was sending the wrong sort. He was sending shrapnel, which was an old-fashioned, Boer War sort of weapon, perhaps because Kitchener was an old-fashioned, Boer-War sort of soldier.

These arguments found a sympathetic ear in Lord Northcliffe, who agreed with French that yes, the Western Front must always be the highest priority, and yes, Kitchener's management of munitions for the war *has* been an appalling cock-up, hasn't it?

On March 27, *The Times* published an interview with Sir John French in which he spoke of shortages of ammunition, and this became what Lord Northcliffe might call a “talking point” in the British press. Do you think Kitchener and the Government have done enough to supply our boys with shells?

One criticism was that while other major powers like Russia and France and Germany had nationalized munitions production for the duration of the war, the British military were still buying their munitions on the open market from private firms. For the Liberal Party, with its longstanding emphasis on free trade and private enterprise, nationalizing industry was a bitter pill. To the Government’s critics, it was as simple as this: every single factory in Britain that was capable of manufacturing shells must be put to work doing exactly that. Whatever it takes, and your political principles be damned.

Even David Lloyd George, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, got into the act, although he was pushing temperance and something called “The King’s Pledge,” a program to get people to pledge to abstain from alcohol until the war was over, which went over in Great Britain about as well as you’d expect. Lloyd George tried to link the two, arguing that drink was at the root of the shell shortage. On April 14, a *Daily Mail* leader scoffed at this suggestion:

“A week ago, the country was told the Members of the Cabinet were about to become teetotalers. A few weeks ago, the public was led to believe that Constantinople was about to become ours. The enforced temperance of the whole Cabinet seems to be about as doubtful an immediate proposition as the capture of the Sultan’s capital....Our gallant commander in Flanders, Field Marshal Sir John French, has repeatedly emphasized the increasing need of shells...the War Office, which might have foreseen this, joins with Mr. Lloyd George and rends our working men, throwing all the blame on their drunken habits. Were it not so tragic, there would be something grotesque in all this.”

Criticism grew until Asquith himself addressed it in a speech on April 20. Having been assured by Kitchener that there was nothing to the press claims, he told the country, “I saw a statement the other day that the operations not only of our Army but of our Allies were being crippled, or at any rate hampered, by our failure to provide the necessary ammunition. There is not a word of truth in that statement.”

Asquith’s assurances did not convince Northcliffe’s newspapers, which responded by asking why, if there *was* no shell shortage, were Cabinet figures like Lloyd George and Kitchener out campaigning against drink? Lloyd George gave a statement in the House of Commons meant to reassure the nation that the BEF was well supplied with soldiers and ammunition; Northcliffe wrote to French, warning him that if the Cabinet succeeded in convincing the public there was no shell shortage, then French himself would be blamed for the BEF’s failures. Since French as an

active duty officer could not make a public statement contradicting the Government, Northcliffe invited him to *leak* a contradicting statement.

The Gallipoli campaign began on April 25 and did not go well from the start, as you know, and over the next few weeks the British experienced a spate of bad news on several fronts. April 22 was the day of the first German gas attack on the Western Front. May 7, a German U-boat sank *Lusitania*, and over the next few days Allied offensives on Gallipoli ground to a halt, a key reason being a shortage of artillery shells.

On April 28, the Women's Conference at the Hague opened, an attempt by feminists and suffragists from a number of belligerent and neutral nations to explore ways of ending the war. I told you the story of the run-up to this conference in episode 107. The conference didn't find a way to end the Great War, but it was a laudable effort that eventually led to the creation of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, which still operates in our day.

The conference drew ridicule from many quarters. Theodore Roosevelt called it "silly...futile...wholly useless and slightly mischievous." The *Daily Express* derided it as a "Pow-Wow of the Fraus," and another paper headlined its coverage of the conference, "This Amiable Chatter of a Bevy of Well-Meaning Ladies." British suffragist and writer Evelyn Sharp described the coverage this way: "There seems to be a certain set of adjectives specifically reserved in newspaper offices for women who set out to try and make the world better. 'Misguided' is fairly common, so is 'chattering'; 'hysterical,' of course, has become a byword in the mouth of anyone who wants to fling a sneer at the women."

On May 9, as the Germans were still pressing their offensive at the Second Battle of Ypres, the French and British tried another attack in the Neuve Chapelle region. The British component of this attack was a dismal failure, costing over ten thousand casualties in the first day of fighting for no gain in territory.

Shortly afterward, the War Office notified French that 20% of his shell reserve was to be diverted to the Gallipoli campaign. That was enough to push French over the edge. He not only leaked War Office documents regarding the diversion of shells to Northcliffe's newspapers, but had copies sent to David Lloyd George, Opposition Leader Andrew Bonar Law, and former Tory Prime Minister Arthur Balfour for good measure.

On May 12, Herbert Asquith received a letter from Venetia Stanley informing him that she had agreed to marry Edwin Montagu. In our time, some historians suspect that Asquith's obsessive attentions were an important reason—perhaps the main reason—she agreed to the marriage. This marriage would not be a happy one. Venetia would have many affairs, and it has been suggested that Montagu was gay and that the marriage was for him one of convenience to shelter his political career.



Unhappy a situation as it would prove to be for the couple, the news was personally devastating to Asquith, and I think it's important to take note of it, even though it was a private matter, because it must have been a heavy emotional blow to the Prime Minister, and worse news is yet to come. This marks, in fact, the beginning of the end of Herbert Asquith's political career.

He received Venetia's letter on a Wednesday, and as it would turn out, it would not even be the worst news he got that week. On Friday, May 14, *The Times* published its front-line correspondent's account of the ill-fated British attack of May 9, under the headline "Need for Shells: British Attacks Checked: Limited Supply the Cause: A Lesson from France." The article included the claim that "the want of an unlimited supply of high explosives was a fatal bar to our success."

May 14 was a dark day for Lord Northcliffe as well; that was the day he learned that his nephew, Lucas King, was among the British soldiers who fell in that bloody disaster on the 9<sup>th</sup>.

The next day, Saturday the 15<sup>th</sup>, brought even worse news for Asquith. Admiral Jackie Fisher, now Lord Fisher, resigned his position as First Sea Lord, the highest ranking officer in the Royal Navy. Fisher had never been enthusiastic about the Gallipoli campaign and his relationship with Winston Churchill, the First Lord of the Admiralty, had grown increasingly acrimonious. Like French, Fisher had been venting his frustrations to Lloyd George, but at last he had had enough.

Fisher was the father of the dreadnought and the most famous and respected naval officer in Britain. Winston Churchill was...the mastermind of the Gallipoli landings, which were plainly failing in their purpose. The press and the public didn't have any trouble deciding who was right and who was wrong. The greatest military minds in the Realm were being ignored, brushed off, and pushed aside by a Cabinet full of lawyers, lords, and dabblers.

[music: "Dorabella"]

Lord Northcliffe's newspaper campaign about the shell shortage had primed the powder, but Fisher's resignation set off the explosion. Lloyd George told Asquith he could not continue to serve in the present Cabinet. With the press and the Tories attacking the Government from without and dissent within, it was no longer possible to carry on as before. There were only two possible paths forward. Either a general election in the middle of a war, an election likely to be bitter and divisive, and one the Liberals might very well lose, or a Cabinet shuffle, one that would include the opposition Conservative Party in a unity government, as the French had done.

On Monday morning, the 17<sup>th</sup>, opposition leaders visited Asquith to discuss Fisher's resignation and renew their call for a government of national unity. Asquith agreed and asked his Cabinet to resign to make way for a new coalition Cabinet. Despite all these setbacks he had had to endure, he hadn't lost his deft political touch, and the new Cabinet left him and the Liberal Party in as strong a position as anyone might hope for, given the circumstances. Asquith himself was still

Prime Minister, Sir Edward Grey was still the Foreign Secretary, Kitchener still the War Secretary.

The Conservatives had come to him with two firm demands, and Asquith had conceded both of them: the removals of Winston Churchill and Lord Haldane from their posts as First Lord of the Admiralty and Lord Chancellor respectively. After Fisher's resignation, Churchill was a lost cause. The demand for Lord Haldane's head was harder to understand. He had been the first War Secretary in the Liberal government in 1906, and he had moved on to Lord Chancellor in 1911 after being ennobled. Haldane was a key supporter and confidant of Asquith's. He was also a Germanophile. He spoke the language fluently and during the naval race with Germany and during the July Crisis, he had attempted some personal diplomacy to avoid confrontation with the Germans. On the other hand, during the July Crisis, he was one of just two Cabinet ministers besides Asquith himself who supported war with Germany to defend France when Grey first proposed it. But once the war broke out, Haldane was on the receiving end of the same sort of attacks as Prince Louis of Battenberg, as the newspapers dredged up old quotes of Haldane praising Germany and used them to question where his sympathies truly lay.

It was entirely unfair, and it's a bit of a mystery why Asquith conceded this to the Tories. Certainly that's how Haldane felt: hurt and betrayed. The relationship between the two would never again be as close, and that is likely a factor in the coming decline of Asquith's political fortunes.

But Asquith had managed to hold onto twelve Cabinet posts for the Liberals against eight for the Tories, one for Labour, and one for the Irish Nationalists. The Irish Parliamentary Party had no formal representation in the Cabinet, but it supported the Government too, meaning there would be no Opposition during the coalition. And Asquith held on to the more important posts as well. The Conservative Leader, Andrew Bonar Law, had to content himself with the post of Colonial Secretary. Maybe his Canadian birth had something to do with that. Colonial Secretary had been Joseph Chamberlain's springboard to power, but during the Great War, it was decidedly a lesser assignment. Arthur Balfour replaced Churchill as First Lord of the Admiralty, and Austen Chamberlain became Secretary of State for India.

Most significantly, David Lloyd George would move from Chancellor of the Exchequer to the newly created post of Minister of Munitions. Responsibility for sorting out the shell situation would be taken away from the Ministry of War and handed over to him, a move even Lord Northcliffe and his newspapers could approve of.

This new coalition would lead Britain for the rest of the war and beyond, and although no one knew it at the time, this moment marks the end of Britain's last Liberal government. Never again will the Liberal Party hold a Parliamentary majority or Cabinet posts, except as part of a coalition. It is also the beginning of the end for Herbert Asquith, something many *did* see at the

time; David Lloyd George is on his way to becoming the most prominent and popular Liberal politician in the country.

It also marks the high point of Lord Northcliffe's career. He could—and did—now claim that he and his newspapers had brought down a government, even if Jackie Fisher had had something to do with it. Northcliffe and his papers generally supported the appointment of Lloyd George and his work at his new ministry, but would continue to criticize conduct of the war. But that is a story for another episode.

We'll have to stop there for today. Thank you for listening. I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank Edwin for making a donation to the podcast, and thanks to Jonathan for becoming a patron. If you have a couple of quid to spare and would like to help out, I invite you to visit the website, [historyofthetwentiethcentury.com](http://historyofthetwentiethcentury.com), and click on the PayPal button for a one-time contribution, or the Patreon button to become a patron. And thanks to all of you who've contributed so far, you help keep the podcast going for everyone.

Next Sunday is Easter in Western Christianity and Palm Sunday in Eastern Christianity, so there will be no new episode, but rest assured that, as always, I will be reading and writing and preparing for future episodes, and I hope you'll join me in two weeks' time on *The History of the Twentieth Century* as we return to the Balkans—remember the Balkans?—to investigate the impact of the Great War there. The Bulgarian Summer, in two weeks' time, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

Oh, and one more thing. During the Gallipoli campaign, the Australian newspaper *The Sun* sent a correspondent named Keith Murdoch to report on the Australian role in the campaign. Although Murdoch spent just four days on Gallipoli, it was enough to move him to write an 8,000-word letter to the Australian Prime Minister, Andrew Fisher, a friend of the Murdoch family, in which he praised the Australian soldiers, but harshly criticized the British Army command, criticisms that were in some cases exaggerated or just plain wrong, as Murdoch himself would later admit.

In London, Lord Northcliffe arranged for Murdoch to meet with Lloyd George and Bonar Law and share his letter with them. Murdoch's letter is credited as one of the reasons for the British withdrawal from Gallipoli. Murdoch served as a war correspondent until the end of the fighting, then returned to Australia and became managing editor of the Melbourne *Herald*. He sought advice from Lord Northcliffe on turning the stodgy *Herald* around and remaking it in the image of the *Daily Mail*. So close did Murdoch become to Lord Northcliffe that some took to calling him "Lord Southcliffe."

Keith Murdoch would pass away in 1952, leaving his son, Keith Rupert Murdoch, to take control of News Limited, the company that owned the *Adelaide News*. From this beginning, Rupert Murdoch would turn News Limited, and later News Corporation, into one of the world's largest media conglomerates.

[music: Closing War Theme]

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