TWELVE MONTHS
WITH THE AUSTRALIAN
EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

BY
"AN ANZAC"

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out and the moon up. It was a trifle chilly, but lovely and fresh. How long we slept I do not know, but when we woke up it was quite dark. The date of that day was April 25th, 1915. Will any one of us ever forget it?

On April 25th, 1915, we were all astir by 3 a.m. There was not an inch of room to spare, we had to sit on our packs, and had to remain very quiet. It was pitch dark, and almost impossible to see the next person to us. The silence was terrible. The cook brought down dishes of hot bully beef stew, and although none of us felt any inclination to eat, we forced the food down us, knowing that we would feel the benefit of it later on in the day. By 4 a.m. the first company was getting ready to go ashore. We could now hear the boom from the naval guns. The pride of the Navy, the Queen Elizabeth, could be heard above all the din. The fort Gabo Tepe (which was thought to have been silenced weeks before) started sending shrapnel over, and the noise of the bursting shells added to the terrific din around us. Soon it was our company's turn to go up on deck, and up the gangway we scrambled and on to the deck. There a wonderful sight met our eyes—shells bursting all round us. The burst of the shrapnel and the booming of the naval guns, although new to us all, did not have any effect on our men. Any stranger looking at the men waiting calmly to go down the rope-ladder to the destroyer would never have believed that they were volunteers having their first baptism of fire.

The warships were sending a regular hail of shells on to Gabo Tepe, and the fort could hardly be seen owing to the smoke and dust from the exploding shells. One by one we
went over the side, our packs groaning and creaking under the heavy weight. It was very risky work going down the ladders. We had three down on the starboard side, this side being away from the shore, which minimised the chance of being hit. That rope-ladder seemed endless. I thought I would not get to the bottom, when a voice from behind me said, "Let go now and jump." I let go and jumped—bumped up against a 4.7 gun. The sailors were working just as if they were going for leave ashore. They helped us as much as they could; but more about the Navy later on. We soon had over three hundred on board, pushed away from the transport, and set out for the shore.

It was getting very light now. All of a sudden we could hear the sound of the rifles from the shore, and we knew that our Third Brigade had landed. The fire was very strong, but it was a welcome sound; we had been waiting for this for so many months that we could hardly realise that our chance had come.

The destroyer took us well in shore. Looking back, we could see more destroyers busy embarking troops from the other transports. From the beach to the transports the sea seemed alive with boats of all kinds. With the shells from the Turkish batteries bursting all around us, it was marvellous that so few of the boats were hit. We had now arrived within a few hundred yards of the beach; a pinnace towing three huge barges drew alongside, and into these barges we quickly scrambled. Each barge had two sailors in it, and the pinnace was in the charge of a middy. Before I go any farther I must say a few words about these middies. Mere boys they seemed to us, but with nerve and skill beyond their years they did not care a tinker's curse for the shells. They were
the coolest of any of us. They had the safety of hundreds of men in their hands that day, and we could not have been in safer hands. What grand officers these men will make later on!

As soon as the barges filled up we set off, the pinnace zigzagging about so as to minimise the chance of being hit. One barge containing members of the First Brigade went down, a shell nearly cutting her in half. It was some time before the men could be rescued, and then they were unfit to go ashore. Their packs had kept them up in the water, but for the time being their nerves were unstrung, especially those who were unable to swim.

We could now see the fort Gaba Tepe quite plainly. We were making for a position about four hundred yards from the fort. As we came near the beach the pinnace swung sharply round, swinging the barges with her. In a few seconds our barge grounded, and then over the side we went, over our waists in water, some of the men going right under the water. It was hard work trying to keep our feet, the stones on the bottom being very slippery. Our platoon quickly formed up, and as we began to move off, the fort sent over a shell, just missing us and mowing down a party of men a few yards on our flank. Each man seized a pick and shovel, and up the cliff we went. We were soaked to the skin, but we never had time to take any notice of our clothes. Our men needed support and we had to get ahead, and lively about it. As we lay just under the brow of the first hill, the whiz and the gip of the bullets could be heard, just to remind us what was waiting for us on the other side. Added to this was the bursting of the shrapnel, tearing the bushes down and seeming quite angry that it could not get us.
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wounded men back over the ridges to the beach; how they managed to keep going I do not know, but they would not give in; they kept at it all day long, and right through the night they were still at it. Our doctor earned a dozen V.C.s that day; he was simply wonderful.

We soon reached our front line, and found our men in a tight corner. Wounded men were lying all over the place, and a small handful of men were holding the line. They were in an old trench, and were keeping up a steady fire all the time, the Turks being on the next ridge.

We stayed there for about two hours, when we received orders to retire to the next ridge, our orders being to hold the Turks and not to drive them—the plan being that we would hold half the Turkish forces, while the English and French forces were to try to force

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In a few moments the order was given to advance, and over the ridge we went. Our men were dropping fast now, our Captain being one of the first. Down the slope we rushed; we broke all previous records for the half-mile. Half-way up the next slope we halted and took off our packs. We hardly noticed that we had them with us, the excitement was so great. Just then word was sent for half the platoon to reinforce another battalion on our left; so away we went to the left, and then through an old Turkish trench; out of that and down the slope we tore. Our wounded were very numerous here, men crawling along making the best of their way to the beach, and all the time we could hear the continual cry of “Stretcher-bearer!” The stretcher-bearers were working like heroes, they were here, there, and everywhere. It was terrible work carrying the
“Achi Baba,” the idea being that they would only have half the Turkish forces to oppose them.

Our naval guns had now ceased firing, not knowing how far we had advanced, and being afraid to fire lest they should hit us. The Turks still kept up an incessant fire from their guns; they swept the hills and put a curtain of fire right along the beach. They must have fired thousands of rounds that day.

Our retirement, though done quickly, was made in splendid order. Our wounded had to be seen to first, then “about turn and run for it.” On the next ridge we started to dig in, and we very soon had cover for ourselves.

As day was drawing to a close we received orders that men were to rejoin their battalions. We had got frightfully mixed up during the day; in the trench with me were eleven other

men, and we represented eleven different regiments, so that will give you some idea how mixed up we were that day.

Our battalion was forming up on the right flank, so there I made my way. I thought I would never find it, for it was pitch dark, and very hard work forcing my way through the bushes and undergrowth. At last I managed to reach the rear of our position. It was almost midnight. I must have looked an awful wreck—no ammunition, pouches flapping open, my putties gone, also my water-bottle. I had had nothing to eat or drink the whole day, and I did not feel inclined for anything. I made my way to our packs, which had been gathered by a fatigue party, and was lucky enough to find mine. Making my way to my company, I found we occupied the right flank of the line. The first thing I had to do was to take a party to the beach for ammunition.
How we ever reached the lines again I do not know.

Nobody had any sleep that night. The Turks tried several times to break through our lines, all the time shouting their battle-cry, "Allah, Mohammed." Each time they were beaten back. The breaking of dawn was a welcome sign to all of us. Posting a good look-out, the rest of us set to work to deepen and improve our trenches. Looking round, we could see the warships busy again now, for with the aid of an observation balloon and a hydroplane (which did marvellous work day after day), they could reach their targets without fear of hitting us. The Queen Elizabeth kept her 15-in. guns going, and the roar from these shells was almost deafening, and the concussion made the hills shake just like an earthquake.

Our field artillery were now trying to get their guns ashore. It took twenty horses

and many men to get the first gun into position, then line on line of men carrying shells were to be seen making for the right flank, about one hundred yards from our trench. It was a welcome sound when they fired their first shot. We could now pay the Turks back in their own coin. Our shells were six pounds heavier than theirs, and we could afford to smile as our gunners got busy. Evening came again, and still no chance of sleep. We were still kept busy improving the trenches and getting ammunition up. Reserve ammunition was kept at Battalion Headquarters (just at the rear of the firing line).

The great trouble was water. The engineers had been working like Trojans; they had dug the roads for the artillery, and had started digging wells for water, but the little they did get was unfit for drinking.
The Indian Transport were now ashore with their mules, and were doing useful work getting food and ammunition to the left flank. These mules are wonderful animals: I believe they could go up the side of a house.

The Army Medical Corps had two large marquee tents erected on the beach under the cliff, and here the wounded were being treated before being sent away to the ships, most of the transports being used as hospital ships. These were still waiting about, and on Sunday, the 25th, every ship put her boats in the water ready to take us off at a moment's notice (they thought it was impossible for us to hold the position). Spies were a great trouble to us, messages being sent along to the artillery, which, had they been taken any notice of, would have cost us many lives. For instance, one night a message was passed along to the artillery,
ever, when an officer came along. He was a Major. Going up to the Captain, he said, "Don't fire in front, there is an Indian patrol out there." Well, the Captain knew that there were no Indians doing patrol work, and looking closer at the man, he noticed that he had 31 on his shoulder-straps; this meant the 31st Battalion.

As we had only sixteen battalions on the Peninsula, to use a slang expression, the Captain "smelt a rat," so he said, "Are you fair dinkum?" (Are you correct?) I was very interested in this little conversation, and imagine my surprise when the man said, "That's right, I'm Captain Fair Dinkum." Captain —— did not hesitate, he did not even raise his revolver, but shooting from his pocket, he shot the man dead.

On examining the body we found that the uniform he was wearing belonged to an officer of the 13th Battalion, and, fearing that he might encounter some of the officers from that battalion, the spy (for such he was) had reversed the numerals, so that they read the 31st Battalion. Thanks to the brains of Captain ——, he did not do any more roaming.

It was an ideal place for snipers, and the Turks were past-masters at this game. They hid in the bushes and sniped at our chaps when they went to the beach. It was like hunting rabbits. Parties went out and scoured the bushes between the firing line and the beach, and in a few days they settled all sniping; but we lost many men during the first few days. One sniper had an ideal place for concealment. About two hundred yards from the firing line was a cliff; there must have been a landslide there at one time, for in the cliff was a huge gap of some fifty yards, just as if it had been cut through;
running up the side of this wall was a deep crack, and in this crack was a sniper. He had provisions for four weeks, and stacks of ammunition. Some lucky shot had found him. He was found dead, shot through the head. But think of the men this man must have shot before he fell.

On April 30th we were relieved from the trenches, and went back over the hill for a spell. We dug in the side of the hill, and were looking forward to a good night's rest. At 8 p.m. we were called out, and had to go up to our Brigade Headquarters and take a pick and shovel with us. We found that we had to dig a trench from Headquarters to the firing line so as to minimise the risk of getting shot, for at that time we had no telephone on to the line, and the signallers were running about; several of them had been shot going to and from Headquarters. We started work at once, each man having a space of four yards to work in. We were stretched out in a long line from the firing line to Headquarters. We finished just after midnight, and went back to our dug-out absolutely tired out. We snatched a few hours' sleep and then went for a swim. It was like a glass of champagne: glorious was no word for it. We were wondering how long we would have out of the firing line, and imagine our surprise when we found that we had to go to another part of the line at 10 that morning; so at that time we moved off again. This time we occupied a post about half a mile to the left of our old position. It did not take us long to settle down again.

A day or two after this we received congratulations from H.M. King George, from Lord Kitchener, and our own Government. We knew then that our people had received the news of our fighting, and I think each of
us felt a little pride in himself as these cable-
grams were read out to us.

The cable from His Majesty read something like this:—

"I am justly proud of my troops from the
Dominions. With great pride I have read
of your great achievements. You have up-
held the traditions of our race. I shall
follow your movements with great in-
terest."

Lord Kitchener’s message I cannot re-
member; but I know how proud we felt when
we read it, coming from so great a soldier,
a man who has spent his lifetime fighting for
his country. It made us feel that life was a
grand thing, and a soldier’s life the best life
of them all.

We had seen the effects of the warships’
iring, but one day in particular we witnessed
a wonderful piece of shooting. The Turks
had put up a battery on our right front, and

opened out on our battery. Things were
very lively for some time, and then the
Queen Elizabeth steamed up well in shore
and fired one shot, which put the whole
Turkish battery in the air. How we cheered!
The “Lizzie” went up another point in our
favour.

Then another day the Turks tried to put
up a battery near the Salt Lake, on the left
of our position. The “Lizzie” found the
range, and that was the end of that battery.
It was wonderful shooting—in fact, our
gunners on the warship could not be praised
enough.

The bravest act that I saw, or ever heard of, during the whole campaign was when
Sergeant J. S. Duffey, of the 8th Battalion,
rescued two men from the same battalion
under heavy fire. A party of three men were
going out in front of our lines to have a shot
at some snipers that were concealed in the
bushes between our line and the Turks. They managed to jump the parapet safely, but before they had gone twenty yards two were badly wounded, and the third managed to get back into the trench safely. The wounded men could be plainly heard from the trench. They were too badly wounded to crawl in by themselves, so a rope was brought and thrown out to them. One of the men caught hold, but the rope snapped. By this time our Colonel had arrived at the spot, shortly followed by the Brigadier. The order was given that no man was to attempt to rescue the men, as it looked like certain death for anyone that ventured over the parapet, and although there were plenty of volunteers for the job, they were not allowed to go. The officers were trying to think out some plan by which they could get the men in, when, without any warning, Sergeant Duffey leapt over the parapet, and amidst a hail of lead reached the first man in safety. He called for a rope, and linking several rifle-slings together, they quickly had a stout line, which they threw to him. Throwing one end to the men in the trench, he worked his way with the other end back to the man. This man was shot through the arm, having his arm badly broken. He was unable to move, so Duffey tied the rope round the man's ankles, and covering him up with bits of brushwood, to hide him from the Turks, he called to the men in the trench to start pulling; then working the man inch by inch, he got him to within a yard from the parapet, and shouting to the men to pull hard, the men quickly had the first man in the trench. But Duffey was not coming in just yet: there was another man out there somewhere, and he was going to find him; so calling for another rope, which they quickly threw him, he went back again. He found the second
man. This man was shot in the back, so Duffey put the rope under his arms, piled some bush on top, and worked him along, giving the order to pull as before. This man was quickly pulled into the trench, but Duffey seemed to be taking his time, when all of a sudden he came flying over the parapet. What do you think he said?—"Here you are, Tom, here's your pipe and glasses. I wouldn't leave those behind." He had gone back for the man's pipe, knowing that he would miss it more than anything else.

You will be saying, did this man get a V.C.? No, he did not; he never received anything. This was what happened:—He was specially mentioned in despatches by our Colonel. Everyone felt that it was a certain V.C., but the despatches were lost, so he received nothing; but if ever a man earned a V.C., Sergeant Duffey did that day. Later on he received his commission, and it was the least that they could do for him.

Another V.C. that was well earned, but never received, was by an Army Medical Corps man (I cannot recall his name for the moment). He had a tiny donkey with a Red Cross band round its head. This man took water and provisions to the firing line, and would bring the wounded back on his donkey. He worked night and day; everyone knew him; he seemed to be tireless, going to all parts of the firing line, always under fire, up the famous shrapnel gully, never caring for the shells and bullets. If anyone should ask who he was, the answer always was the same, "Why, that's our first V.C.," for we felt certain that he would be recommended. One day we found his donkey quietly munching by the roadside, but its master was nowhere to be seen. This was unusual, for wherever