

R.N.D

Royal Naval Division

Antwerp, Gallipoli &

Western Front

1914-18

ROYAL NAVAL DIVISION
HANDYMEN TO FIGHT ON LAND & SEA

1ST BRIGADE		2ND BRIGADE
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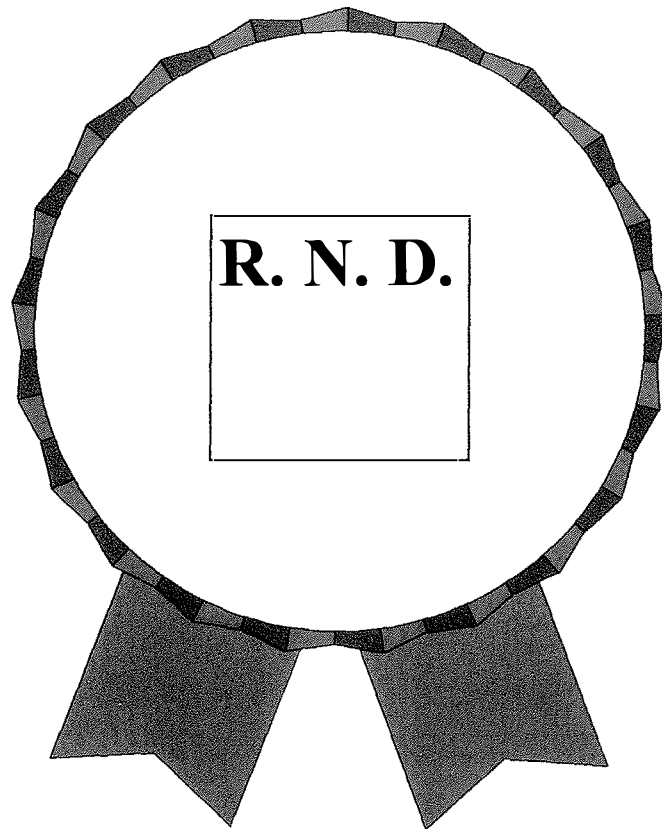
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The picture on the front cover is a Royal Naval Division recruiting poster. I appreciate Trevor Tasker's help in forwarding this for inclusion in the R.N.D.

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ANTWERP.

PART ONE :- THE MOERBEKE AFFAIR.

THE BACKGROUND.

This incident concerning the retreat from the burning city of Antwerp highlights the horrendous conditions in which the officers and men found themselves. It also shows the lack of training that this fledgling infantry division had under its belt. The subject was touched on in R.N.D. number 7 pages 552/553. The Staff, does not come out of the Antwerp campaign well. When reading this account one is surprised that this part of the ill-fated 1st Brigade, on the night of the evacuation, did not leave the trenches until about 10.30 pm ! This clearly shows the problems of command and control. It is not for me to come to any firm conclusions as to fault, for they were as lacking in training as the battalions. This was well before the learning processes had time to work, as highlighted in the later years of the war. By then the Royal Naval Division had developed into a formidable fighting machine. Captain Christopher Page RN writes in (R.N.D. Number 4. Page 233.) --- The Division came to be regarded "In the glorious company of the seven or eight most famous in the British Army." In issue number 6 of the R.N.D. page 456, in Seely's account he states at about 9.45 p.m. he left Antwerp under the impression that there was not a human being left in the whole perimeter. Also Lieutenant Chichester states, in his evidence, (R.N.D. number 8.) that at about 10.30 pm, he, together with Major Richardson (Staff Officer) had a conversation and they left Antwerp with Richardson stating "Everyone has cleared out, I am the last man to cross" --- . So a situation had developed where the 1st Naval Brigade was divided, a part under Commodore Henderson was to be interned in Holland and another part, mainly the Hawke Battalion, but with some Collingwoods and Benbow, with the Marines of the Portsmouth Battalion, were to be involved in what became known as the Moerbeke Affair. Where some were to escape making their way to England, others, after calls to surrender, being held as German prisoners.

Before arriving back in England, Lieutenant Colonel F.W. Luard the commanding officer of the Portsmouth Battalion informed General Paris of the matter and his concerns. Luard had ordered his officers to submit reports on the circumstances at Moerbeke, as feelings were running high. These were produced aboard ship the *SS Honorius*. But here again the general lack of training and almost unbelievable carelessness, were to be highlighted, as remarkably these reports were lost ! A report at the Admiralty states :-

Lieutenant Newall of the Royal Flying Corps was returning from Belgium and on a steamer lent his great coat to a Naval Officer who returned it on reaching England. Lieutenant Newall found the attached letters in the pocket of the coat, and not knowing the name of the Naval Officer handed them to the Officer Commanding R.F.C., who passed them on to me, through M.A.I. (1) 727.

As previously stated the account deals with a call for surrender and the circumstances surrounding the matter. Unfortunately for the Admiralty the papers found their way to Colonel Cockerill of the War Office. With the Army aware of the detail one can imagine the feelings at the Admiralty! On the 17th October 1914 Captain William Reginald Hall (Later Rear Admiral Hall.) the Director of Naval Intelligence forwarded them on to H.F. Oliver the Naval Secretary who endorsed them as follows :-

This seems to be a case which should be investigated.

The First Lord at the Admiralty Winston Spencer Churchill wrote :-

Where are the officers concerned ? A Court of Inquiry must be held.

One can understand that matters on the 17th were progressing at speed. It was stated that Lieutenant Colonel E.G. Lywood, Major A.H. French & Major N.O. Burge officers of the 10th Battalion, Marine Brigade, Royal Naval Division were involved but they could not trace an officer by the name of Gowney. The following day it was found that Lieutenant Gowney was an officer recently promoted from the ranks and that Lieutenant Colonel Lywood was on sick leave and that it would be as well to wait for his return to duty, before ordering an enquiry.

On the 19th October the Adjutant General of Royal Marines sent a confidential report --

I am to request that on Lieutenant Colonel Lywood's return to duty a Court of Enquiry would be set up. (2)

However, at the same time all this was taking place General Paris upon his return to Deal made his own enquires collecting available evidence. One can wonder what General Paris's feelings were when he found out that the War Office and Admiralty were already aware of the facts. He had just lost most of his 1st Brigade and now this blow surfaced. His thoughts are not recorded, so I will leave them to the imagination of the reader.

A Court of Inquiry assembled at Forton Barracks on the 24th November 1914, by order of General Sir W. Nicholls, K.C.C., Adj-General of the Royal Marines for the purpose of investigating what was to become known as the **Affair at Moerbeke**. In order to outline the case I reproduce below the evidence presented by Lieutenant Colonel F.W. Luard, R.M.L.I. the officer in charge of the Portsmouth Battalion. In the next issue of the R.N.D. (Sept 1999) I will deal with the matter in great detail, it makes interesting reading.

**Lieutenant Colonel Frank William Luard. Officer in Charge
Portsmouth Battalion.**

I wish to give some account of the day preceding the action at Moerbeke, as it bears on the physical condition of the men on the latter day.

On the 7th October the battalion was under arms all day, during which the town of Antwerp was under shell fire. The men were carrying 300 rounds of ammunition. About 6 o'clock I was sent for from the Brigade Headquarters, and at the same time two messengers arrived from opposite directions. One messenger was from General Paris, ordering a retirement, and the other was from Commodore Henderson, asking for reinforcements. There was a long consultation as to which should be obeyed, and ultimately it was decided to send my battalion to Commodore Henderson. When the battalion arrived at his Headquarters there was some further delay, and eventually I got an order to take my battalion into Henderson's trenches, in order to lead the Germans to suppose that it was an ordinary relief being carried out. As soon as the men were in the trenches, they were to fire, to confirm the idea that the trenches were occupied; and the Naval Brigade was to retire, and we were to follow. Owing to the delay which had been caused, the movements which were to be executed were becoming increasingly difficult. It was now dark. I asked for definite orders, as I knew it would be difficult to undertake a night march in face of the enemy. I had received no written orders, and although I asked for orders in writing, I did not get them. I took down briefly the verbal orders which were to the effect that I was to place my battalion in the trenches during the evacuation of the Naval Brigade and follow the Naval Brigade as rear-guard. I asked that the orders I had taken down should be signed, but Colonel Ollivant and Commodore Henderson both refused.

I was in some difficulty at the time because I had just lost my Adjutant. The night before it had been made apparent to me, by the fact that I had received no orders, there must be something wrong with the Brigade Staff. Another Battalion Commander and I together went to make some representation about this at General Paris's Headquarters. The Brigadier was on the verge of a nervous break-down, and I was asked to save the situation by giving him my Adjutant for the Brigade Staff. I did so, and from that time I have had no Adjutant. This was on 7th. When I left Commodore Henderson's Headquarters on the evening of the 8th I was still under the impression that after replacing the Naval Brigade in the trenches, the Naval Brigade was to concentrate for a night march, and that we were to follow them. This I knew had been General Paris's intention. When we had gone about a mile towards the trenches, I was informed for the first time that the Naval Brigade was in two portions, that the trenches were widely separated, and that I should have to divide my battalion into two parts. I therefore detached Major French with two Companies to one part. I continued to try and get information, and I had not gone very far when I was told what I had not been told at the Headquarters, that these two portions were proceeding under separate arrangements and by different routes. That increased my difficulties, as I

had hoped to re-unite with Major French, whom I had detached, and who knew nothing whatever about the other arrangements. We had no written orders for a retirement and no divisional or brigade orders had reached me. I saw that Major French would be in difficulties, and I detached my acting Adjutant, who had been present at Commodore Henderson's Headquarters, to go and find him, and remain with him so that Major French would be in as good position as I was as regards information. I went on with the other two companies, and reinforced the Naval Brigade at my portion of the line. Another difficulty now arose, as I could not find any officers of the Naval Brigade except one junior officer. He was unable to find the Battalion Commander, and the men of the Naval Brigade had no orders to evacuate the trenches. There was consequently a very long delay before they came out of the trenches; they did not get out until 10.30 p.m., whereas the retirement was ordered at 8 p.m.

Eventually after a great delay the Naval Brigade did come out of the trenches; we did a little fire and followed them. We marched along the line indicated on the map before the Court, and were much relieved to meet Major Burge, with Major French's two companies who happened to cross our route. This was a pure coincidence and a great relief. Our men had had a very tiring day before the night march began. We then marched until we arrived on the bank of the River Scheldt, and followed the Naval Brigade into a large riverside dockyard, full of machinery, coal, etc. It was very dark and I imagined we were led there for the purpose of transporting the troops by water. I found there a motor-car which I identified as having belonged to the Naval Brigade. We waited there in expectation of boats arriving for perhaps three quarters of an hour. But no boats arrived: there was no sign of life and I came to the conclusion that something had gone wrong. I got the column under arms, and the Naval Brigade likewise. About this time I came across a naval officer who said he thought he knew the way; he led me through an impossible route over railways into sheds full of machinery in the pitch dark. I saw it was hopeless and took command and led the men back. Eventually I got over a wall and reconnoitred, and at last found a bridge to which I led the troops. I got the bridge cleared of refugees by Belgian Gendarmes, who lent me every assistance. We went over the bridge without any difficulty. The men were very exhausted, and when we arrived at the dockyard where we thought the boats would be forthcoming, the men dropped down and were asleep almost in a minute.

The reason for their exhaustion was that the march had been conducted at such a rapid rate by the Naval Brigade. Our men, heavily equipped as they were, many of them between 50 and 55 years of age, found the forced pace extremely trying; and what made the march more difficult and more exhausting was, that we did not know the routes, and could only follow the Naval Brigade at whatever pace they went. The Naval Brigade was strung out and in no sort of formation, and made none of the usual rest halts. We could not lose sight of them or we should lose the route.

When we had got over the bridge, I had found some more men belonging to the Naval Brigade, standing about. They were blocking the exit to the bridge. I drew my men up on one side, and then formed these Naval ratings into any units I could by calling out the

names of the ship's battalion. I found a Belgian guide, and I handed him over to a naval officer I did not know, and told him to take the men straight on to St. Nicholas. The naval officer managed to lose his guide very soon and led us off the main road. When we got to a point I thought was out of danger, I called a halt for a time, the men being absolutely done up.

I afterwards proceeded again until we came to a village which was full of naval ratings. I marched my men through them, and coming to a stack of straw gave instructions for this to be pilfered and for the men to make up some beds. We had an hour's rest, and in the meantime Major French's command had joined us and completed my battalion. I was just going to sleep when Lieutenant Crossman, (3) who was apparently in command of a portion of the Naval Brigade, tapped me on the leg and said he did not know what to do with his men. They were completely out of hand and altogether mixed up. Moreover they had thrown away their ammunition. He said, "What am I to do?" I replied, "The first thing to do is to get them to form up into their own units, you can't do anything with them as they are now." I also told him that I had better lend him four company sergeant-majors and some N.C.O's., to fall in his companies for him. He agreed, and I did this; but eventually he said he thought he would go on by himself, and he got his men into some sort of order along the road. He then asked me to put two of my companies in front and two behind his ratings, and having done this we got away again. These were the Battalions I was supposed to be rearguarding. The reason we struck out in the direction we did was that there had been rumours that the seventh division was coming up in this direction, and being in complete ignorance through having received no orders we imagined that General Paris intended to try and effect a junction. We went to village after village, and made absolutely certain that we should, at any rate, get orders eventually at St. Nicholas. When we marched off again I practically took charge of the Naval Brigade and regulated the halts, etc. The Naval Brigade was formed of much younger men, and carried no ammunition or equipment, but our men were older and very much exhausted; the only thing to do therefore was to treat them gently, and I marched about three quarters of an hour at a time, and halted a quarter of an hour.

To give you some idea of the utter demoralisation of the Naval Brigade, soon after we started, I heard some shots, and noticing a crowd of men behind, I went back and discovered that two of the men had shot two of the other men. It was a pure accident and the result of careless handling of arms. As far as my men were concerned I did not lose one man through falling out. As we got on, it was more apparent that the Naval Brigade was out of hand ; the men were really nervous; they were impressed by the fact that they had thrown their ammunition away and had an idea the Germans were upon them. Personally, I did not think there was anything to be alarmed at, and that we should soon find General Paris. Continuing our march, we eventually arrived at St. Nicholas. I had very great difficulty in getting the Naval Brigade into a field where I halted. They wanted to go where they liked, and their officers appeared to have very little control over them. There

did not appear to be any Petty Officers, and I did not see a Petty Officer take any steps to control them. There were five officers, as far as I can remember. One was Lieutenant Crossman, who was very energetic, but who had been wounded in the head, and was a bit light-headed, I think. He was perpetually shouting and driving the men about like sheep. He did not stick to anything very long. Another officer was named Dobson, (4) but he was quite incapable of taking command. There was another ex-naval officer, not quite so bad as Dobson, and the two younger officers were worth far more than the others but quite inexperienced. They were, in fact, very junior and apparently did not like to take charge when their seniors were about. At St. Nicholas, after getting the Naval Brigade into the field at about 5 o'clock in the evening, I got hold of Crossman because I thought it was necessary to exert some pressure upon him to take command of his men, and while I was doing so Major French and Major Burge, whom I had sent in advance to arrange requisitions and billeting, arrived with the information that Locheren, the next village, was in the hands of the Germans. The Civil Authorities at St. Nicholas seemed to be anxious to get rid of us, and after consulting a map, we were informed that there was a service of refugee trains running from St. Gilles Waes to Ostend. Major French was put in command of the advance guard to make arrangements for the entraining of the men at Kemseke, and one of the young naval officers was told off to make corresponding arrangements for the Naval Brigade. When we started off upon our march on that route, I marched with the Naval Brigade with a view to keeping them in hand as far as I could, but I recognised that my place really was with my rear companies in case of a rear attack. I went, however, with the Naval Brigade, but they were continually accelerating their pace owing to nervousness. I had strongly impressed upon Crossman that it was impossible for my men to march at the pace he did; moreover, by following so close, he was paralysing the action of the advance guard and getting out of touch with the rear guard. He undertook to march at about three miles an hour, and for some time I marched with them.

Question :- Were they doubling?

Answer :- No, but they were going as rapidly as they could walk. After we had gone for some distance, there were fresh signs of nervousness, and unauthorised cries from the ranks, "Push on, push on, the Germans are after us." I halted the Naval Brigade and said, "There are no Germans behind; if there are any at all, they are in front, and by marching as you are, you are marching on top of them." After that they went on at a fairly reasonable pace for a time, and I suggested having a platoon of my men in front of the Naval Brigade, in order to regulate the pace, at the next halt. It was quite impossible, however for this platoon to get in front of the naval column as they were marching so fast. Lieutenant Crossman had entirely disregarded my instructions as to the rate of march, and as to a halt which I ordered twice by cyclist messenger. I am also told that on my leaving the Naval Brigade to join my rearguard the men were told to push on for all they were worth; this was quite contrary to my orders.

We ultimately arrived at Kemseke, and although not important, the following has a little bearing upon some of the difficulties I experienced. When we arrived at cross-roads (*indicated to the Court on the map*), there, I had no information from the front as to what the train arrangements were. It was perfectly dark, about 8 o'clock in the evening. I got some Belgians together, and enlisted their services as guides. I did not quite know at which station it was best to entrain, but was advised to entrain at Stekene, which is quite close to Kemseke. Acting on this advice I proceeded to that place. As I was going down the road I heard a noise and someone shouting, "You are on the wrong road." I halted to find out the cause of the commotion. I got no reply to my messages to the rear, but eventually heard that Major French was there. What had happened was that Major French had made arrangements to entrain at one place and I at another. Eventually I turned the column about and entrained at the near station, as valuable time had been wasted by this delay. This unfortunately brought me to the tail of the column instead of the head, and prevented me from being able to superintend the entrainment of companies in front, which added to my difficulties later on.

When I came up with Major French I was rather short with him for moving the rear of my column without reporting to me, and he seemed annoyed. There was some delay, and eventually we proceeded to entrain at Kemseke. Major French was somewhat perturbed because he had lost a portion of his company, and seemed to think I had something to do with it. They were eventually found at the far station. The train was full of refugees and a certain number of naval ratings. It was, therefore, difficult to get my men in the train. Each man had to get in wherever he could find standing-room, irrespective of company or platoon.

Question :- How many men had you ?

Answer :- About 450, and there were about 400 of the Naval Brigade as well.

It was difficult for us to get the men into the train, and the confusion was added to on arrival at Stekene, where a number of naval ratings got in on top of us. We were so tightly packed that there was not an inch of room. When the train started off most of the men, after their exhausting march, fell asleep almost instantly; and many of them had their feet so badly bruised that they took their boots off. After proceeding a little distance the train was fired on on both sides; the train did not stop and the fire did not seem to me to be very effective; we took very little notice of it. We went well through that little sniping, and when the train was near Moerbeke it stopped for water. The train then went on again and stopped short. I heard intermittent shots going on in front of the train. I looked over the side of the train and saw between clouds of engine smoke some kind of light. I thought fighting was going on well ahead of the train, and that this was the cause of the train slowing up; but what was really happening was that this fire was being directed from the shed in the station at the engine. I heard an officer's voice call out "English," and assumed that part of the 7th Division in the village was having a scrap. There was not very much

firing going on, and I attached little importance to it. After some minutes, however I heard Mr. Gowney's voice calling out Major French's name. He said: "Send some marines to the front." I jumped out and climbed over a track, and ran forward to the engine and found several German prisoners being handed into the train by Lieutenant Gowney. There were four dead Germans lying on the ground. Lieutenant Gowney gave an account of what happened, the effect of which was that one or two Germans got on the engine, and the marines pushed them out with their fists first of all, and then fired upon a party which came to support them; it was this party which had called out "English." Six were killed and four taken prisoners.

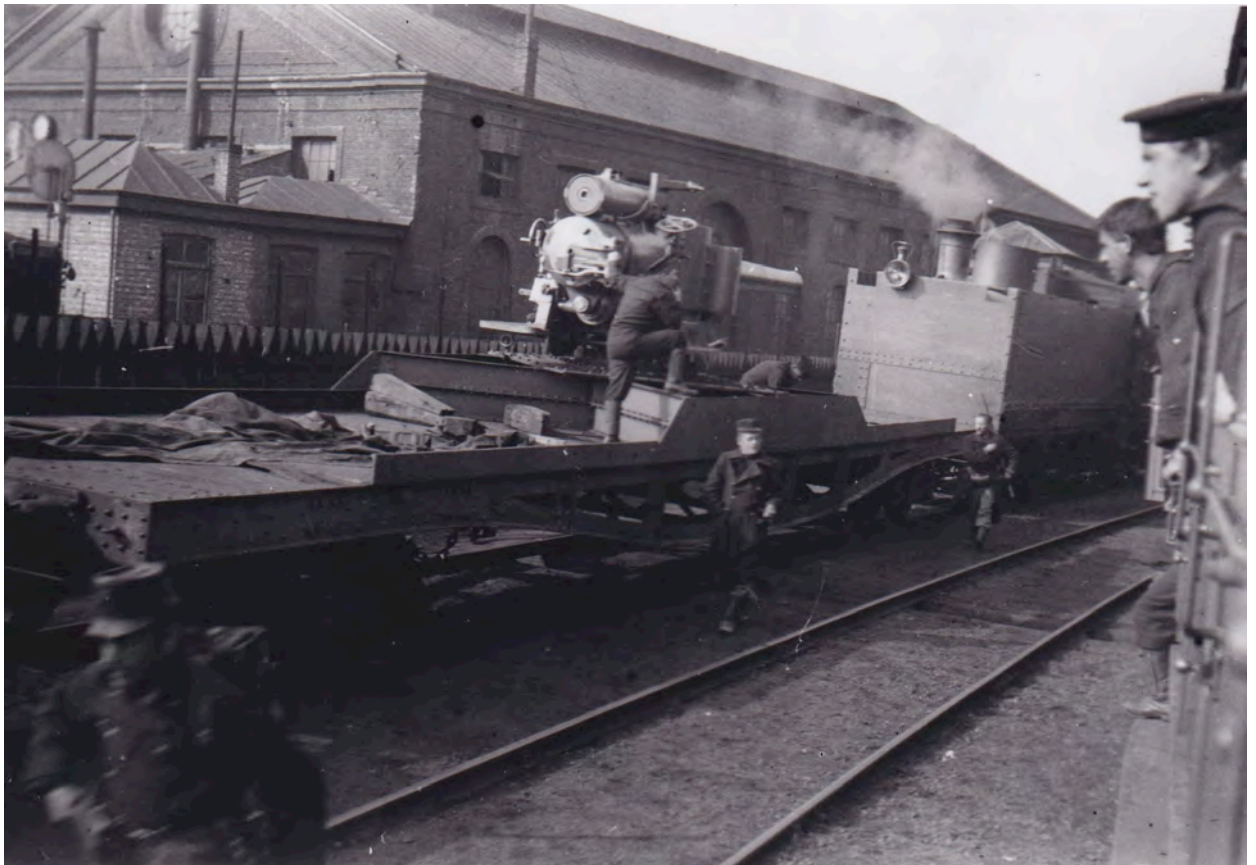
When I came upon Lieutenant Gowney, it was about three minutes after the train had been brought to a halt. There were 20 or 30 men who Major French was directing to fire on the station building, the Germans had evidently been stopped by the train as they were in the act of dismantling the station. Telegraph and telephone lines were lying all over the place. As far as I could ascertain there were no other Germans in the immediate neighbourhood, but an intermittent fire was going on on all sides from a short distance away. I asked Lieutenant Gowney what had happened, and I joined Major French, who had made excellent dispositions of the men available; but, as there was nothing very urgent going on, I went to find out the situation of the engine, I climbed on the footplate and I saw two marines trying to get steam on the engine, and the Belgian driver informed me, that the points had been diverted and the train had been run into a blind siding, the points had been locked, so that the train could not go back. The two marines, who had evidently had some railway experience, had succeeded in getting a certain amount of steam up; but the wheels, although they were revolving, did not have any effect upon the train. I was told that it was impossible to make the train move, as a rail had been removed, and I rejoined Major French, as it was evident that the train was immovable. About this time Major French reported to me that Colonel Lywood was advocating surrender. In consequence of this (I am not sure whether it was before or after I visited the engine), I went down the line to see Colonel Lywood, but could not find him. But I did see a naval officer, one of the young officers I had sent forward to make arrangements. He had the curious idea that the train was under his command as he had made the arrangements. I pointed out to him in the most emphatic language that the troops were under my command, and that, under no circumstances was there to be any surrender. Lieutenant Gowney happened to be there, and heard what I said.

Question :- Was any other officer there ?

Answer :- Lieutenant Gowney said afterwards that Colonel Lywood was there but I did not see him. It is possible however that he may have been there. It was extremely difficult to see who was or who was not there, as there was only a limited area lighted. I believe Major French was also there.

Over the page :- Train carrying men of the R.N. Division from St Gilles Waes. On nearing Ostend, passes an armoured train on which is a British Naval 4.7 inch gun on the 9th October 1914. Imperial War Museum Reference Q 14783.

To resume, I went down the train to find Colonel Lywood.. One side was in pitch darkness, and on the other side it was dark after a certain point. I could not see Colonel Lywood, but I heard a man calling out to another man, "We have to hand in our arms." The voice added, "Colonel Lywood says so," I shouted as loudly as I could, "Colonel Lywood has no authority to say so. I am in command of this train and there is to be no surrender; all men are to stand by their arms." I then returned to the station. The fire had increased and several more officers had come up in the meantime. Our firing was still being directed at the station office, and I found myself with half a dozen men on one side of an iron fence near this house, in which apparently there were Germans, as firing could be seen coming from the top windows. Major French had collected some men, and there was a good deal of hostile firing from some distance away, to which he was replying. I could not say how far, as it was dark, and we could only see the flashes of the enemy's rifles. There was also hostile fire coming from adjacent buildings, and the roof of a shed. It appeared to be ineffective fire and I did not see anyone hit. Our party replied vigorously, and after a while the firing ceased. Immediately after this, Major French reported for the second time that Colonel Lywood was authorising surrender. I tried again to find Colonel Lywood, I did not succeed in finding him, but on my way I heard a naval officer say that the Naval Brigade had to hand in its arms. I shouted out, "I am in command of the troops, and the men are to stand to their arms. There is to be no surrender." I then returned and by this time the fire had practically ceased. Our response to their fire had probably made them think that we had more men than they thought and there was an appreciable lull.



I then said as far as I can remember “We have run into a mess. It is no good waiting here, there is no enemy at present, we cannot possibly get away by train, and our only course was to resume the march on foot. Collect your men, and form them up in front of the engine.” I proceeded along the train and called out, “All marines fall in front of the engine with your arms.”

Question :- How long was the train ?

Answer :- One officer tells me it consisted of about 50 trucks which would be about a quarter of a mile long.

Question :- Did the men stay in the train the whole time this scrap was going on ?

Answer :- To begin with none of us knew whether the train was going to move off or not, and I don't think anyone wanted them to come out until they were called for. There was no great necessity for any more men than we had. Eventually we tumbled the men out of the train and I ordered them to go forward. Some asked whether they were going, and what they were going to do. I said, “We are not going to stay here. We are going to resume the march, and going to our own country.” It was perfectly obvious that the naval ratings did not intend to go and had been ordered by their officers not to do so. We went on and I called a halt and sorted out the Marines by companies, and thought we had got them all there. In the darkness it was difficult to tell how many we had, and how many were missing. The men were all warned, and it seems extraordinary that the company officers should not have seen that they were not all there. It should, however, be explained that when the company officers heard the firing all round, instead of getting the men out of the train they went where they thought the firing was, and were used by Major French, and when they went back to collect their companies, they did not realise what part of the train they had originally been in. Under the conditions under which we were entrained this is not surprising, as every officer had to put his men anywhere he could find a vacant space. As a matter of fact, we did not count numbers until we got into Selzaete.

Question :- Did you hear Colonel Lywood say anything about surrender ?

Answer :- No.

Question :- Did you see him?

Answer :- No, I did not see him, and no officer reported that they had heard that Colonel Lywood had given actual orders to the men to surrender; although they reported that Colonel Lywood was advocating surrender, on account of the fire being drawn on to woman and children.

Question :- Did you tax him at Selzaete ?

Answer :- No, I purposely avoided doing so; he began to talk to me, and as I thought it was possible he might say something to incriminate himself, I stopped him, and told him on the earliest opportunity to make a statement in writing.

Question :- Did you give him any jobs ?

Answer :- No, very little indeed.

Question :- Was that purposely?

Answer :- No.

Question :- Did you send him, when the battalion was divided up, with one of the portions ?

Answer :- No, he accompanied me.

Question :- You detached two companies, and placed them under Major French. Would it not have been better had you given Colonel Lywood command of them ?

Answer :- There was no intention to disregard him, but on such service, it is sometimes a difficult matter to consider seniority at the moment. One had to do what one can most quickly carry out.

Question :- These naval officers, did you know anything of them ?

Answer :- No, I had not seen any of them before. Lieutenant Crossland was the senior present, but I did not go to him, nor did I know where he was to be found, and I did not know the man who came to me, and who had advocated surrender. But he was a man I had sent forward to make arrangements for entraining the Naval Brigade.

Question :- When you shouted out “No surrender,” did the naval ratings do anything ?

Answer :- No, there was no sign of life, and a great many of the men were absolutely done. There was no one exercising command over them, and there was no response when I shouted out “I am in command, stand to your arms.”

So far as my men were concerned, a great many were utterly incapable of further efforts; and if you realised what their condition was, I think you will understand that they were pretty well done up. We started on Thursday and had been under arms until Friday night, with no food, no water, no rest, and continual marching since leaving Antwerp, and had covered 32 or 33 miles. The men only had what they had in their haversacks, and a few apples and pears that were given them by the villagers. Early in the day on the 8th, I

received a message that a retirement was likely to take place. I happened to come across a cart loaded with biscuits, and I told my men to fill their haversacks. Apart from these biscuits they had nothing from noon on the 8th until noon on the 10th, 48 hours later, when, on arrival at Bruges, they had a meal. A great many of them were old men. Many had their boots off and could not get them on again; besides that, a good many of them took cover until they were wanted, and were difficult to find again. Among them was Sergeant-Major Humphries, whom I saw during the action. He was a man who under no circumstances would surrender.

Question :- Did he know of your marching along the line ?

Answer :- Personally I thought all the men were close to the train, and that it was quite sufficient to call upon them to fall in. I told some of them what we were going to do, but it is quite possible some did not get the information, if they were at some distance from the train. We reckoned we lost between 200 and 230.

Question :- Do you think the cry of surrender had anything to do with the loss ?

Answer :- I did not think so at the time, it did not seem to have any effect upon the men I came into contact with. I am sorry to say we had to leave our doctor behind, as he was attending to our own, and German and refugee wounded.

Question :- Were you asked to give any decision ?

Answer :- Not at any time, and as a matter of fact there was no decision it was possible to give, except the decision to resume the march. In the first place, there had not been severe firing. There had been little or no loss, and there was no enemy in sight, much less to surrender to. When we got on board the ship at Ostend, I asked the company officers to give an account of their action, and then for the first time I found that not only was there a great feeling against Colonel Lywood's action, perhaps quite conceivably so, but there was a veiled attack on myself. I do not at this moment understand what the company officers thought I should have done; but apparently they thought I should have had a violent row with Colonel Lywood, I abstained from saying too much in their presence. In the first place, I think the less the word *surrender* is uttered the better, and secondly, I did not wish to discuss the culpability of a senior officer with his juniors, and in point of fact I did not at first believe it to be true. I knew that I should have plenty of opportunity of making my own intended action clear. Moreover, I had not very much time to think about these things just then, as the main thing I had to consider was what to do next; and it is well to understand that the whole incident did not occupy more than about a quarter of an hour, or 20 minutes at the outside. With regard to this question of a decision, I was surprised to see from Captain Stockley's report furnished to me that I was asked for a decision. What decision he referred to I cannot imagine. The only decision that could be asked for was as to what should happen to Colonel Lywood, or whether we were to surrender; and both I look upon as most improper questions for him to ask.

Question :- Did Major French take charge at all ?

Answer :- Well French was in the front part of the train, and when I arrived there were 20 or 30 men there. Major French was then directing them most efficiently to fire into the building.

Question :- Do you know whether Colonel Lywood gave you any assistance in getting the men together ?

Answer :- I do not think so.

Question :- It is quite possible you might not have seen him ?

Answer :- Quite possible.

Question :- Major French seemed to have taken upon himself to take charge ?

Answer :- I think he was quite right in doing so. It was my business to watch the whole situation, to see what prospects there were of getting the train out; and eventually to decide what was to be done. This I did.

The next day of the hearing.

I want to make a supplementary statement. There are two points, one with reference to a question of the Court, which I did not see the bearing of at the time. It was to the effect that there seemed to be a good deal of Major French. It seemed to imply that Major French was exceeding his sphere of responsibility. I want to utterly repudiate any idea in connection with Major French, because Major French, is far and away the best officer I have, and on any occasion when a difficult situation has arisen I have sent for Major French, because I know from experience he is a man of quick decision, energetic action and sound common sense, and that he invariably sends back good information. When I joined Major French at the front of the train, I saw at once he had the situation in hand. I did not suggest that Major French was exceeding his duty; on the contrary, I thought he was doing quite the right thing. In peace time, I have had some difficulties with Major French, whose ideas do not always coincide with my own, but never on the field.

With reference to my statement yesterday, I confined myself to giving you facts on the military situation, as far as Selzaete. When we got there, we stayed for six or seven hours, and eventually got to Bruges. On the way to Bruges I wrote a short account in my field pocket-book, and handed it to the Adjutant to give to General Paris. At Bruges I got out

of the train and went to the stationmaster in order to ascertain when there was a train to Selzaete. I intended to go back to Selzaete to pick up the stragglers. But I found it impossible to get back, as about that time Selzaete had fallen into the hands of the Germans. We moved into a transport to come home, and I wrote a memorandum asking my company officers to report on the action at Moerbeke. When the reports came in, I learned for the first time that they contained what I considered to be veiled charges against myself. I called the officers together as soon as I had an opportunity, and informed them I should put the whole of their reports before the General, and that any charges they made against me would have to be substantiated up to the hilt. I explained to them at the same time my action, and the categorical instructions I had given to the naval officer, and the repudiation I had publicly made of Colonel Lywood's authority to advocate surrender. I did not at the time, and do not now, attach very much importance to the charges, such as they are, contained in these reports, because, in the first place, they were made in the heat of the moment, and in an entire ignorance of what my action had been, and I don't think, at the same time, they were aware that I should send in the reports as they stood. I knew there would be an inquiry into the question of the cries of surrender and Colonel Lywood's action and I carefully avoided asking him for any verbal explanation, but I told him to write a report on his personal action., and knowing well that sometimes he says more than he would like to be brought up again, and that it would be fairer for him to make any statement he wished in writing, deliberately, I checked him at once, by interrupting him and changing the conversation.

Lieutenant Colonel Frank William Luard.
Officer In Charge Portsmouth Battalion. (10th Battalion.) (7)

* * * * *

Note :- Lieutenant Colonel Frank William Luard took part in the Gallipoli Campaign and died on the 13th July 1915. He is buried at Skew Bridge Cemetery, Helles. (See R.N.D. number 6, September 1998, page 486 for details.)



Photograph taken by L.G. Sellers in May 1998.

References :-

The main account is from the Public Record Office, Kew ADM/137/3112. Proceedings of a court of inquiry assembled at Forton Barracks.

1) Public Record Office, Kew. ADM137/1010. Report page 399.

2) Public Record Office, Kew. ADM137/1010. Reports page 400, 401, 402.

Note :- Colonel George Kynaston Cockerill (Director of Special Intelligence.) See Leonard Sellers Book 'Shot In The Tower' ISBN 0 085052 553. 5. Page 9 for details.

3) **Lieutenant. Robert Francis Crossman :-** Details of service.

Next of Kin was his wife 'Ocean View' Polmeer, Par, Cornwall. He received his Commission on the 25th August 1914 and joined the 1st Brigade, 4th Battalion, the Collingwood. He saw service at Antwerp, becoming a prisoner of war. On 17/11/17 he was transferred to Switzerland, Fribourg. He was repatriated to England, arriving in London on 24/3/18. The same day he appeared before a Medical Board at Millbank. He was declared unfit for General Service for a period of 2 months. He had suffered Cerebral Concussion & Amputation of 2nd finger of his left hand, due to an accident. He received as a result 2 months leave and his next Board was 3/5/18, he was informed that he was still unfit for a further 3 months, but was suitable for sedentary duty. On the 27/3/18 he had been presented with his 1914 Star/Ribbon at the R.N.D. Record Office. He was posted to the Tank Corps but returned on 6/1/19. However, on 17/2/19 at Connaugh Hospital, Aldershot he was declared fit for General Service.

Above detail from the record book R.N.D. 'Record of Officer's Service' ROS 182. Vol 1. Page 283. Admiralty Library, Great Scotland Yard, London.

4) **Lieutenant. Theodore Young Dobson :-** Details of service.

Address - Vallishedy, Raynes Park, Wimbledon, London S.W.

He received his commission as Sub Lieutenant. R.N.V.R. in August 1914 and was posted to the 1st Brigade, 4th Battalion, the Collingwood. He received promotion to Lieutenant on 4th October 1914. He was captured during the Antwerp Campaign, becoming a Prisoner of War. He was Interned in Switzerland and was Repatriated 14/9/17. He became on 1/12/17 the Assistant Secretary Port & Transit Executive Committee - Ministry of Shipping. A few days later on 5/12/17 his case was surveyed at the Admiralty, when he was declared - Fit for light duty at the Ministry of Shipping. He was transferred to "President" 26/10/17 for duty with the Port & Transit Committee. His 1914 Star/Ribbon was forwarded 5/2/18.

Above detail from the record book R.N.D. 'Record of Officer's Service' ROS 182. Vol 1. Page 19. Admiralty Library, Great Scotland Yard, London.

Note :- To be continued, part 2 will appear in September 1999. (Issue 10.)

GALLIPOLI.

DIARY OF SAPPER ERNEST LEONARD MASON. No.462. ENGINEERS UNIT, No. 2, LONDON FIELD Coy SECTION 111. ROYAL NAVAL DIVISION.

British Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.

- 1.3.15. Monday.** Left Walmer 8.30 a.m.
Arrived Addison Road 9.30 a.m.
Arrived Avonmouth 1.00 p.m.
Left Avonmouth 6.00 p.m. in Transport *Somali*.
Sea moderate.
Left *Frankconia* in Dock.
- 2.3.15. Tuesday.** Sea moderate.
Two fishes - fortunate beings !
- 3.3.15. Wednesday.** Grand Weather.
Ship on Starboard.
Position retained
through day 7 miles.
- 4.3.15. Thursday.** Fine weather
Ship off Starboard
exactly as before.
Ship passed on Starboard
battered about, slight list,
Bows, dabs red paint.
- 5.3.15. Friday.** Fine weather.
Ship disappeared
Allowed to sleep on deck.
Expect Gib. Tomorrow morning.



Ernest Leonard Mason.

Photograph Mrs Molly Butcher



Mason's grave photograph taken by Kieran Hegarty in May 1998.

- 6.3.15. Saturday.** Fine weather.
Sighted light. 4.30 a.m.
In Strait. 6.00 a.m.
African Coast mountains and wild.
European side less wild but mountainous.
About 12 miles across.
Lighthouse along both sides.
Sighted Gib. About 2/3 along Straits
about 1000 feet high.
On one side acute concrete incline, very large area,
supposedly for water collection.
Torpedo boats and small cruisers cruising strait.
- 7.3.15. Sunday.** Fine weather.
Snow-capped mountains on Port side, probably Sierra
Navada, finest sight I have ever seen.
Hugging Africa, very mountainous.
- 8.3.15. Monday.** Fine weather.
Heavy swell, ship rolling.
Accidents down companion way.
- 9.3.15. Tuesday.** Sighted Gozo. 12 a.m.
Arrived Malta. 1.30 a.m.
Transferred to Harbour.
Palatial Government Hospital.
Large French Cruiser arrives in harbour "*Lion Gambetta*",
their band playing "Tipperary".
- 10.3.15. Wednesday.** "*Frankconia*2, "*Royal George*", Both transports leave.
Malta oranges very fine.
Large numbers of men round ship selling cigarettes etc.
"*Astra*" seeking anchorage fouls our bows.
Exchange compliments with French Soldiers on transport
"*Charles Roux*".
"Tipperary", Marseillaise", "National Anthem" etc.
Leave at 4.30. Weather rough.
We could not land.
- 11.3.15. Thursday.** Moderately rough sea behind.
Short Storm.
Thunder storm about 11.0 p.m.

- 13.3.15. Saturday.** Cold.
Arrived Lemnos 8 o'clock.
"*Queen Elizabeth*" in harbour which is quite natural and about.
6. M. D.
7. S. I. H. including R.W.
Large N.O.H.
F.L.R.O.H.
- 14.3.15. Sunday.** Warm.
Collared for Guard.
Snow-capped mountains 8,000 in N.N.E. direction.
Q. E. left harbour, also two others.
Large Tramp in harbour with hole about 8 feet diameter in bows, just about water line, listing out.
Slept on deck.
Men off land in boats with nuts, figs, eggs, delight, chickens and goats for sale.
Small town dotted round harbour.
- 15.3.15. Monday.** Went for a swim, water rather cold. .
- 16.3.15. Tuesday.** Packing hold of ship (Stocking)
Went out in boat to Sound near Shore for jetty, 50' x 2' , 100' x 3' etc.
Went for swim, warmer.
Cattle by horns out of hold, four lowered by boat, 1 dead.
Out in boat before breakfast.
- 17.3.15. Wednesday.** Transferring 1st. Com. Goods to Shore.
Form lighter towed by lighter to S.
- 18.3.15. Thursday.** X.5.
Set off about 6.30 am.
Steam P and going W.
- 19.3.15. Friday.** Off Dardanelles.
Sea fair.
Back 2.0. p.m.
- 20.3.15. Saturday.** Quite rough in H.
Steam P towed from Frank. By deck Pinnacle.
Sunk off us.
Capsized boat off Starboard.

- 21.3.15. Sunday.** Service on boat deck.
- 22.3.15. Monday.** Squad drill section of men.
The size of a rope is denoted by its circumference in inches.
The possession of picks to shovels will be decided by the nature of the ground.
In ordinary soil the entrenching implement is almost equal to a pick.
- 23. 3.15. Tuesday.** -----
- 24.3. 15. Wednesday.** Went sailing during the morning to take No.1 stuff.
Off shore.
Again after tea.
Boat filled up off S, through condensed water.
- 25. 3. 15. Thursday.** Left Lemnos at about 9.30.
Passed numerous islands.
Caught and passed the "*Cawdor Castle*", with another large steam boat with sails.
- 26. 3. 15. Friday.** On guard.
Passing numerous islands.
Large boat astern.
Sports, Tug of War. In section team.
Walked away with all the heats in semi, but lost in final against 1st. London Field.
Our section, 2nd Company, goes Pillow fighting.
9 at 4.
"*La Torraine*" caught us.
- 27. 3. 15. Saturday.** Arrived Alexandria about 8 o'clock.
Stayed in Harbour.
Electric Trams etc.
Left about 4.0. p.m.
Became a member of the R.N.D. D.E.
Black band of the size of the three spots on D.E.
- 28. 3. 15. Sunday.** Arrived Port Said about 9 o'clock.
Large piles of salt on bank of Canal (polished sides)
Fine oranges offered for sale by natives, probably Jaffas.

29. 3. 15.	Monday.	Unloading etc.
30. 3. 15.	Tuesday.	Unloading etc.
31. 3. 15.	Wednesday.	Fine. Disembarked to Camp.
1. 4. 15.	Thursday.	Fine. Arm swollen owing to vaccination.
2. 4. 15.	Friday.	Fine. Arm swollen. Sand penetrates everywhere. Rifles choked, lock & bolt, covered by cloth.
3. 4. 15.	Saturday.	Fine. Unloading goods.
4. 4. 15.	Sunday.	Went to Communion, then walked out to the end of Canal water. Sand Storm, (slight). Started 9 o'clock. Sleeping outside.
5. 4. 15.	Monday.	Slight sand storm. Busy assisting to claim goods for stores. (Engineering). Received Princess Mary's Present.
6. 4. 15.	Tuesday.	Embarked in " <i>Ayrshire</i> " (Australian Shire Line)
7. 4. 15.	Wednesday.	Clearing.
(Note the same entry until 12th April 1915 incl.)		
13. 4. 15.	Tuesday.	Cinematograph.
14. 4. 15.	Wednesday.	Left Port Said 6 Lighter Fixed 8 One rope. " <i>Alnwich</i> " ahead (" <i>Alnwich Castle</i> " Union Castle Line.) Submarine Guard.
15. 4. 15.	Thursday.	My ship off Lemnos.
16. 4. 15.	Friday.	No entry.

17. 4. 15.	Saturday.	Porpoises in wake of lighter.
18. 4. 15.	Sunday.	" <i>Almwich</i> " Lemnos.
19. 4. 15.	Monday.	No entry.
20. 4. 15.	Tuesday.	Latest War News, Official. The enemy taken on the Dutch Front and are rushing from the dykes.
21. 4. 15. To 26. 4. 15. Incl. Unreadable or no entries.		
27. 4. 15.	Tuesday.	Arrived off Straits. Heavy firing.
28. 4. 15.	Wednesday.	Continued bombardment. Village burning. Shifted to pontoon off Australian. Held Position.
29. 4. 15.	Thursday.	Steaming, firing, rumour of Turkish transport. Shell bursting falling near War Ship (5) Left. Disembarked in boat drawn by tug. Similar lot fouled Torpedo boat, boat broke lose. Made dug-out on Coast. Bullets raining overhead. Bed about 1. Shrapnel bursting overhead and rocketing all night. Thank God in dug-out.
30. 4. 15.	Friday.	Two chaps wounded. Rifle smoked. Left dug-out on Coast. Up ravine to position behind firing line. Made another dug-out. Shell on corner. Bullets whistling all round. Left with pick and shovel, made road up cliff for R.F.A. Shrapnel bullets Two shells from " <i>Goben</i> " near ship. Returned to dug-out. Under bullet fire to fetch kit etc. Embarked on A.L.

1. 5. 15. **Saturday.** Tenedos early morning.
Entrance to Straits.
Heavy bombardment by ships through night.
2. 5. 15. **Sunday.** Landed (*Clyde*)
Dug-out underwood.
3. 5. 15. **Monday.** Improved trenches end of Gully.
X Beach.
Bathed.
4. 5. 15. **Tuesday.** X. Beach. Trenched and barbed wire.
Original firing line barbed wire.
Dug-out.
Retreat stream.
Retreat & heavy quick fire.
5. 5. 15. **Wednesday.** Turkish fire dug-outs. Dement. (1)
Dug trench.
Cook's mate.
Dug out hill crest. Dement.
6. 5. 15. **Thursday.** General advance.
White House.
Machine Gun. (2)
Firing Shot.
Dug trench.
Advance White House.
Dug-out.
Retired telescope den.
7. 5. 15. **Friday.** Making road near White House by gully,
up to neck in water, very tired.
8. 5. 15. **Saturday.** Improving road near inland end of barbed wire
in front of White House, in darkness.
9. 5. 15. **Sunday.** Making communication trench between White House and
First Line.
Left old and dangerous camp for new one end of ridge
opposite dug-out. (Dement.)

- 10. 5. 15. Monday.** Bathed in straits.
Evening. Barbed wire up gully in advance of First line.
Bond hurt, took back others, communication trench.
(big affair)
- 11. 5. 15. Tuesday.** Remained in camp.
- 12. 5. 15. Wednesday.** Day off.
Took tea up to 1 & 2.
Communication in trenches.
Started off 6.30 for another 24 in communication trenches.
Bombarded heavily in wet trenches, worked through night.
- 13. 5. 15. Thursday.** Making communication trench.
Arrived camp 6.30.
Message from Hamilton.
Re-inforcements promised by Kitchener.
- 14. 5. 15. Friday.** Morning off.
Discovered Turkish concentrated.
Guilding ours.
- 15. 5. 15. Saturday.** Making road up gully
White House.
Hard Work, very tired.
Heavy bombardment of French here, and English right flank
2 hits 25 rounds.
Warship in Straits.
Going into action.
- 16. 5. 15. Sunday.** Making road up to Whitehouse by Gully.
Afternoon off.
Swim in Straits.
Warship potted.
Shrapnel overhead.
- 17. 5. 15. Monday.** Making road. W.H.
Detailed off for new trench.
Job fell through.
Turkish bombardment of Gully Road.

- 18. 5. 15. Tuesday.** Day off preparatory to night duty.
Went to Coast with Wettern through village (Niggers fighting) Fort used as French hospital.
French encamped on graveyard.
Niggers pulling Turks church to pieces for firewood.
Night job trench in advance of present first line.
- 19. 05. 15. Wednesday.** Making dug-out for G.
- 20. 05. 15. Thursday.** Making dug-out for G.
- 21 . 05. 15. Friday.** Making dug-out for G.
- 22. 05. 15. Saturday.** Making Dressing Station.
- 23. 05. 15. Sunday.** Service at 12.45.
Making Red Cross Dressing Station.
- 24. 05. 15. Monday.** Making road near H.Q.
Night job. Working Infantry Road.
- 25. 05. 15. Tuesday.** Making bridges.
Williams shot.
Cloud burst up at the peak and at Krithia.
50 % of our chaps flooded out by flood water.
Valley flooded.
Dead Turks washed down road, spent night releasing water, boots and socks off, trousers tucked in - exciting.
- 26. 05. 15. Wednesday.** Day off.
Went for swim morning.
Night job.
Making Infantry Road.
4 Armoured Rolls Royce.
“*Majestic*” off coast.
Arrival of transports with troops, nets out.
Paraded at 2.
- 27. 05. 15. Thursday.** Heard that “*Majestic*” had been torpedoed and sunk.
Arrived Coast on road job.
Saw green hulk of “*Majestic*” about half mile out.
Heartrending sight.

28. 05. 15.	Friday.	Working on road near Camp. Two men blown up by unexploded shell. Had steak & onions for grub - great luxury. Went for swim during afternoon, about 600/700 in. Shells all round. Shell just fallen. Kitchen. Night job. Making road near fountain.
29. 05. 15.	Saturday.	Morning rest. Making Dressing Station near Main Road. To Beach. Strained Ankle.
30. 05. 15.	Sunday.	Resting strained ankle.
31. 05. 15.	Monday.	Resting ankle. Re-inforcements for Engineers arrive. Dean, Burrows etc.
1. 06. 15.	Tuesday.	Resting ankle in Camp.
2. 06. 15.	Wednesday.	Sick of Guard. Foot not well. Out with section firing. Digging trench (waiting) for infantry to advance to avoid congestion in firing line. We are shelled by our own Artillery in front. 1 killed. 1 wounded. Turkish trench 250 yards off. Back to Camp 9 or 10.
3. 06. 15.	Thursday.	Carrying on with job, we are sapping to Turks, arrive back 5 -6. Just turning in, when orders, all No. 2, turn out; we take timber up behind firing line for redoubt.
4. 06. 15.	Friday.	Day of advance. Turned out about 9.30. Iron rations. Our job to make Turkish trench suitable for our occupation. Standing by. Our bombardment commences.

Hill covered with smoke.
 We advance, untried men. (C)
 Capture two trenches.
 C retires.
 Others have to fall back.
 Our machine guns captured.
 Our job knocked on the head.
 See Turks re-occupying positions.
 Left flank appears to have retained trenches (A.G. S. men)
 We cross by M to dig common trench.
 Wait till 12. A.m.: job falls through.
 We are relieved by No. 1.

5. 06. 15. **Saturday.** Sears hit in thigh.
 In camp (rest)
 Bomb thrown.
 Shelling from Asia.
 Red Cross Station smashed full of chaps, no bodily injury.
 One chap goes off his chump. (railway)
 Short rifle.

6. 06. 15. **Sunday.** Shelling us from Asiatic side with old and new guns 5-6, 9-2
 Swim.
 Turks throwing up embankments.
 Shooting at Manchesters.
 Redoubt job in Manchester trench, they M go off without
 being relieved.
 We have to man trenches.
 Sergeant drunk.
 Infantry asleep.
 Turks jump into trench.

7. 06. 15. **Monday.** Arrive back at 7.30.
 Ankle considerably swollen.
 Carrying on with job.

8. 06. 15. **Tuesday.** Sleeping during day time.
 Strife hit by Lyddite shell.
 Making redoubt up in captured trench - Manchester.

9. 06. 15. **Wednesday.** In camp.
 Moore hit in leg,
 Shelling as from Asiatic and peninsula.
 Strife dead.

Note :- This probably refers to Spr C. J. Strype of the R.M. Engineers who was killed on the 8th June 1915 and is buried in Lancashire Landing Cemetery, Helles. Grave B. 78. No doubt Strife was the nick name for Strype. See the R.N.D. number 6, of September 1998 , page 482., for details.

- | | | |
|--|-------------------|---|
| 10. 06. 15. | Thursday. | Shelling from Lyddite all round us.
Chap buried in dug-out.
3 a few yards away.
Went to base for timber in wagon, into water for same. |
| 11. 06. 15. | Friday. | Unexploded Turkish shell about 5" x 9"
4 lead rings to take rifle in. |
| 12. 06. 15. | Saturday. | In camp. |
| 13. 06. 15. | Sunday. | Service.
Left on communication.
The trench enfilade bridges. |
| 14. 06. 15. | Monday. | Arrived back at 6. A.m.
Swim.
Shelling us from Asiatic.
Night, making bridge transverse across communication trench. Officers. Ceylon. |
| 15. 06. 15. | Tuesday. | Feeling fed up.
Night job. Sapping towards T. trench - 30 yards.
Manchester trench.
Felt rotten all night. |
| 16. 06. 15. | Wednesday. | Arrived back 8.35
Feel rotten.
Will see Doctor.
Left for hospital. |
| 17. 06. 15. | Thursday. | No entry. |
| 18. 06. 15. | Friday. | Heavy artillery going on.
Feeling much better. |
| 19. 06. 15 to 22. 06. 15. Incl. No entry. | | |
| 23. 06. 15. | Wednesday. | (Admiralty advised us Ernie was killed by shrapnel. 23 rd June.) |

Note in dairy :- Killed in action, Kereves Dere Valley (Gully).

Buried by the Rev. Bevill Close, Chaplain of the R..N.D.
in No. 2 Cemetery, Royal Naval Division, Gallipoli Peninsula..
Between Morto Bay and X Beach, near by the East Krithia Road,
about 2 miles up from Cape Helles.

The family was to receive the following letter :-

No. 2. Field Company,
Divisional Engineers. R.N.D.
British Mediterranean Exp. Force.
C/o G.P.O. London.

Dear Mr Mason,

30th June 1915.

Probably you have been advised by the Admiralty of the death, while on duty, of your son Ernest L. Mason.

Beyond the official note, and as one who has been closely associated with him in his work out here, I feel impelled to write and tell you of the high esteem in which he was held by the Officers, N.C.O's and brother Sappers of the No. 2 Field Company, and more particularly No. 3 Section.

Your son's courage and resource in times of danger and difficulty (and especially do I remember this during the heavy fighting of May 6th) make his loss deeply felt by all of us and stamps him as a particularly fearless and brave soldier.

It may help you to sustain the irreparable loss more easily to learn that his name was already before Colonel A.B. Carey. R.E. for promotion to commission ranks as a reward of, and in recognition of good work, well done.

His death, I found by personal enquiry at the Red Cross Station, was instantaneous, being caused by shrapnel wounds in the chest.

I was personally present at the funeral service conducted by the Divisional Chaplin, and the cross, which was placed over his grave, will be yet another monument to a brave man who fell doing his duty in a great cause.

Believe me,
Yours sincerely,
Ronald Grierson. Lt. R.M.

Note :- Entries of the 5th & 9th May contain the word Dement. It is unclear if this refers to his state of mind or another person. The dictionary states the word means :- ‘ To drive mad, craze, raving. In the sense crazy with worry, much wrought up.

I would like to thank Molly Butcher of Gloucester for the use of these papers and the photograph of her uncle. Ernest Mason is now buried in Skew Bridge Cemetery, Helles. See the R.N.D. issue 6 of September 1998, page 486, for details.

Entry in ‘The Roll Of Honour’ of the Church of St Luke’s Camberwell and of The Bradfield Boy’s Club. - March 1st, 1916.

ERNEST LEONARD MASON, the son of our lay reader, was a lad of very exceptional promise, and had started finely as an engineer, having been a pupil at the Borough Polytechnic, and having graduated at the I.A.E. Although of a very retiring disposition, he was well known to everybody at St. Luke’s, as a most regular communicant, and a Sunday School teacher, a work which he took up in 1907, and at which he was most diligent and successful, acting also as violin accompanist at our Sunday morning Children’s Service.

The Following Poem is included in St Luke’s., Roll of Honour.

“Those who lived, and those who died,
They were one in noble pride,
Of desperate endeavour and duty nobly done;
For their lives they risked and gave,
Very soul of life to save,
And by their own great valour and Grace of God
they won.
Britons, Britons, Britons are they,
Britons every one.

The Rev Bevill Close, M.A., R.N.

Officiated at the burial of Ernest Leonard Mason, however, not only was he a priest, he had an enquiring mind, which the following reports highlight.

From :- The Rev. Bevill Close, M.A., R.N.
18th July 1915.

To :- A.D.M.S.
Royal Naval Division.

REFERENCE SHEET.

During the recent engagements it has struck me, from watching the bearers of the Royal Naval Division Field Ambulances, how extremely laborious the work was at times-bringing heavy men on stretchers through the long trenches which is now necessary. The width of the trenches does not allow of the use of the two wheeled stretcher trolley, but a mono-cycle carrier appears to me a much felt want. I have devised a simple apparatus of this nature, and Major Teale of the R.N.D. Engineers has made an excellent sample of one which, however, will doubtless be improved upon as times go on. This sample has been tested in the trenches and has been found to work admirably, and the bearers testify that it certainly reduces their labour. The evacuation of the wounded is also expedited with this apparatus, and I beg to submit that about half a dozen be made as soon as possible for immediate use.

I will not attempt to describe the details of this, as a sample accompanies my submission. Major Teale will doubtless add remarks from a technical side.

Bevill Close,
Chaplain R.N.

Major J.L. Teale submitted a report that the stretcher carrier had been made by him from the only material available on the spot. He considered it a practical design that needed improvement. He suggested that the following modifications were required :- That tubes be used instead of solid bars and heavier tyre wheels with solid rubber tyres. It would need coned springs of a design easily replaced, when broken and that could be fixed at the axles. In conclusion he suggested a permanent pillow be fixed on each cross rail, as it would save carrying a loose one and would serve with a stretcher placed on the carrier. A. Gaskell the Fleet Surgeon followed this up with a report to R.N.D. Divisional Headquarters stating :- This ingenious Mono-cycle Stretcher Carrier has been examined and tested, and I strongly recommend its immediate adoption by the Division. He suggested that it be known as the "Close Stretcher Carrier". Further, recommendation was included that the design be submitted to G.H.Q. so that it might be adopted throughout the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.

It was sent to the Ordnance Depot, Lancashire Landing with a comment that an official report was being sent to the 8th Army Corps. However, Bevill Close was to write from Imbros on the 2nd August 1915 to the Fleet Surgeon :- Col. Thom was very pleased with the carrier, so was the D.M.S. they both relied much on your opinion. They have sent me straight off to Alexandria to put it through, so I am off in a few minutes. (1)

References :-

1. Public Record Office, Kew. WO95/4290. Reports all marked 13.



The Rev Bevill Close, M.A., R.N. "One of the first funerals at 'our' cemetery - later named Skew Bridge Cemetery. The Wettern papers. Box 3 of 3. Marked 40. June 1915. The Liddle Collection, Brotherton Library, Leeds University.

WESTERN FRONT

63rd Div - ASSISTANT PROVEST MARSHALL.

NOTES FROM WAR DAIRY - 1916.

6/6/1916

FRESNECOURT - DISCIPLINE.

On the whole good, though troops were being slack in saluting and one or two cases were reported of men riding on loaded wagons.

1/7/1916 9am.

OURTON - ACCIDENT.

Lance Corporal Pring (MMP. RND) whilst unloading his revolver his lanyard caught in the trigger, with the result that he was shot through the knee and hand. He was evacuated to hospital at Bunes.

2/7/1916

OURTON - BOMBS.

4 were found in a field not far from Ourton and one also found in a house. It was proved that these were left by some division which preceded the R.N.D. at Ourton.

7/7/16.

OURTON - ESPIONAGE.

Spies and Pigeons reported to have been seen in Hermin. This matter was handed over to APM IV Corps.

20/7/16.

COUPIGNY - MISCELLANEOUS.

Notified that RND would be known as 63rd (RN) Division henceforth.

4/8/16 - 14/8/16.

COUPIGNY - ACCIDENTS.

189th Orderly fell off horse and was slightly injured. 2nd Lieut H.R. Clarke 14th Worcester's whilst riding a motor cycle was run into, near Bullyalley. When found was in an unconscious state, no trace of the cycle could be found. Sgt Briggs MMP whilst riding a horse bare backed fell and caused injuries requiring removal to 1st FA. A motor car owing to bad steering ran into back of Coupigny huts, the steering gear was much damaged. Corporal Raff accidentally shot himself with a pistol whilst shooting rats which is contrary to orders.

6/8/1916.

COUPIGNY - CIVILIANS.

Children belonging to stall holders in BOUVIGNY WOODS were reported to be circulating round guns. I am arranging for evacuation of stall holders from the woods. Several cases of theft of small articles have been reported from huts. In all cases these have been done by small children, as a result of huts being left unattended.

15/8/1916.

LOSS OF MEMORY.

One man of Hawke Battalion taken in charge by APM at Boulogne for having unsound mind.

2/9/1916 7.15 pm.

COUPIGNY - DRUNKENESS.

Lieutenant De-la-Mothe of the Howe Battalion (1) arrested for being drunk in the Petit Sains Road, Hersin. A General Court Martial was held on this officer at Fresnecourt.

3/9/1916. 11am.

COUPIGNY - FRENCH SOLDIER.

A French Soldier was arrested for being drunk whilst in charge of a horse and harvesting machine. He was handed over to the French for action.

4/9/1916.

COUPIGNY - DESERTER.

Herbert Lewis 2nd RM arrested in Hersin. This man is an old offender and well known to the police.

13/9/1916.

COUPIGNY - CONTAMINATED WOMAN.

In Hersin evacuated to Betlune & thence to Paris by French authorities.

23/9/1916.

OURTON - INSUBORDINATE PRISONER.

Sentenced to 3 days cells with bread & water by APM.

1/10/1916.

OURTON - APPONTMENT.

Sub Lieutenant Gealer (2) joined as traffic officer but returned to his unit (Hood Battalion) on 3/10/16 as he was unsuitable.

16/10/1916.

LEALVILLERS - GAMBLING.

Was found to be taking place in Lealvillers. The offenders were punished and the premises closed.

22/10/1916.

HEDAUILLE - ACCIDENT.

One of the men engaged in traffic control was accidentally shot by Sgt of Blackwatch who was showing his men how to unload a pistol. The necessary action was taken.

1/11/1916.

HEDAUILLE - RIFLES LOST.

A great many rifles were found by MMP in billets recently vacated by troops. This habit is very prevalent especially in the forward area. It is very difficult to trace as troops were constantly on the move.

1/11/1916.

HEDAUILLE - PRISONERS OF WAR.

Several cases of German P of Ws have been reported as having escaped. It appears to me that the P of Ws who are utilised on Government Work are insufficiently guarded and go about their work in a very slovenly manner.

Reference & Notes :- Public Record Office, Kew. WO/154/73. These papers were closed to public view until 1994.

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(1) **Lieutenant. Claude Douglas Fenlin De la Mothe** :- Details of service.
Next of Kin was his mother Mrs De la Mothe of Granville House, Eastbourne.
He was commissioned on 23/8/14 as a Temporary Sub Lieutenant R.N.V.R.
He served at Antwerp as an officer in the 2nd Brigade, Howe Battalion.
With his battalion he sailed to Gallipoli where he was promoted to a Lieutenant on 26/5/15.
M.E.F. Mentioned in Despatch for distinguished and gallant services. Supplement London Gazette 13/7/16, page 6952. In France, missing presumed killed in action 13/11/16. Later buried British Cemetery No 19. (Sherwood) Grave 33, Row B. See R.N.D. 6, page 444 for further details.

Above detail from the record book R.N.D. 'Record of Officer's Service' ROS 182. Vol 1. Page 7. Admiralty Library, Great Scotland Yard, London.

(2) **Sub Lieutenant. Harry Gealer** :- Details of service.
Next of Kin was his wife of Windsor House, Windsor Terrace, Stoke, Devonport.
He was promoted from the ranks as formally Dev/180688 R.N.
Commissioned in 1915 as a Temporary Sub Lieutenant. Went to Gallipoli 13/9/15 as an officer in the Hood Battalion. Disembarked at Marseilles, France on 20/5/16. Killed in Action 13/11/16.
Buried in Ancres British Cemetery. See R.N.D. 4, page 259 for further details.

Above detail from the record book R.N.D. 'Record of Officer's Service' ROS 182. Vol 1. Page 124. Admiralty Library, Great Scotland Yard, London.

WESTERN FRONT.

WHIZZ BANG.

The sand bags flew a thousand yards -
Perhaps a little more -
The trenchboards leapt up to a height
As ne'er I've seen before.
The cordite smoke it quite obscured
My whereabouts from sight,
For many a windy minute.
It was dark as deepest night.
The debris, like confetti
At a wedding showered down.
Whoever fired that gun for me
He must have been a clown.
He missed me, though I'll grant it
Was perilously near,
And at that very moment.
I could not gauge my fear.
Yet, after all, what mattered, it
Only made me smile,
For in any day of seven -
A miss is as good as a mile.

A.B.

Taken from 'The Mudhook' number 8 of October 1918. This was a divisional magazine that was only to run to eight issues.

NOTES FROM THE FRONT.

ROYAL NAVAL DIVISION'S

MEMORANDUM

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY. AUGUST 1915.

This is the second in the series. It appears that in this case the R.N.D. was using the expertise of the Army's 29th Division. This information is dated 10th July 1915 and is by H. DE B. LISLE, Major General, Commanding 29th Division. It is apparent that he did not want a weakness to appear when others worked closely with his famous and immortal Division.

PART TWO. A LECTURE ON TRENCH WARFARE.

In application of the Memorandum on Trench Warfare the following notes are published for the information and instruction of Units or formations that may from time to time be attached to the Division.

Most of these notes are contained in our text books, which however, are not accessible in the firing line.

ONE.

Although Trench Warfare should not be entirely defensive, the main object of a trench is to enable troops to defend the line against superior numbers. The defence of the line depends on :-

- (a) The spirit of the troops.
- (b) Defensive measures adopted.
- (c) Trench discipline.

(A) The spirit of the troops includes far more than individual or collective bravery. It means the determination to maintain the line at all costs, both as a duty to the Empire as well as a credit to the Unit concerned. Officers especially must not be satisfied with inadequate defensive measures, such as bad trenches, bad communications, bad firing positions, etc., but must be continually thinking while walking along their section as to how all these details can be improved. Brigadiers, or one of the Brigade Staff, must visit the firing line and support trenches at least once a day. Regimental Commanders must do so frequently and must make their headquarters in the support trenches, or sufficiently close to the firing line to ensure constant supervision. Company Officers must remain in the firing line or support trenches.

- (B) The defensive measures are clearly detailed in the Memorandum on Trench Warfare referred to. Much depends on trench discipline. The value of any Unit can be seen quicker by walking down the trench than by any parade inspection, and a good battalion invariably shows good trench discipline. This term includes so many points that it would be impossible to deal with all of them. The following, however, are points which distinguish old tried, and well disciplined Battalions from new formations which have not had experience of actual warfare.
- (1) Wild firing, especially at night, denotes want of discipline and is a hall mark of excitable and nervous troops.
 - (2) Troops which have become callous to danger often show the converse and do not maintain sufficient sentries, and in consequence in case of a surprise attack the defenders are caught asleep, not having time to man the trenches. This shows equally bad discipline.
 - (3) No line of trenches when taken over by a Unit is so good that it cannot be improved. The parapet does not last for ever, the banquette wears away, and communication and support trenches can always be improved. Unless a proportion of the defenders are constantly at work on improving trenches, the time comes when the parapet does not stop bullets and defences crumble away, a clear indication of bad trench discipline.
 - (4) An idea that trenches are intended for sleeping and cooking appears to be prevalent. Sleeping and cooking should not be permitted in the firing line, but should be relegated to the support trench. With reference to par 6 of the memorandum on Trench Warfare, it will be seen that by day one-third of the troops allotted should be maintained in the firing line, one-third resting or eating, and one third working. This proportion has been found by experience suit all cases. No eating, cooking or sleeping should be permitted in the firing line, but men should be relieved in the firing line, from those in the support trench periodically, to enable all to get a fair share of rest by day as well as by night. Unless this is done men will not get enough sleep, and night attacks on several nights in succession will find the troops so tired that they cannot be relied upon. This state of things will be due to want of proper trench discipline.
 - (5) An important item of trench discipline is sanitation. This does not mean the provision of latrines, but the sweeping up daily of all remnants of food, paper, old clothes, etc., which accumulate in an extraordinary way unless dealt with daily.
 - (6) The return of all surplus arms and equipment, whether our own or those of the enemy, is not only an Army Regulation, but has been repeated more than once in Divisional Orders. The best method of carrying out this, is to collect all spare

equipment at Regimental Headquarters and send it back daily by ration carriers, when these go to Brigade Headquarters to draw rations. To break up rifles and use them as supports for shelters, to use bayonets to make gridirons for mess tins, or as pegs for telephone wires or blankets, is a mark of bad discipline and must be instantly checked by all officers.

The above points are those which are most frequently noticed and it is very essential that from the first the strictest discipline be maintained. Any relaxation will seriously diminish the fighting value of a Unit, which may result in the loss of a trench, costing many valuable lives to recover, as well as bringing discredit on the Battalion concerned.

TWO.

Before Sections march from their support trenches to relieve men in the firing line their arms must invariably be inspected, magazines must be charged and at night bayonets fixed. The cleanliness of rifles and the provision of reserve ammunition are points which require constant attention. Rifles should not be allowed to stand in the path behind the banquettes, but should be in racks leaning against the parapet.

THREE.

Every evening, when it is getting dusk, Company or Platoon Commanders must personally look along each rifle placed in position on the parapet, to see that every man if called upon to do so will fire in the right direction and correct elevation if he presses the muzzle down on the parapet. Neglect of this precaution results in high fire which is valueless, and often makes the difference between holding and losing a trench.

FOUR.

All troops must stand to arms half an hour before day-light and this is the hour when Commanding Officers should make their first inspection, to see that all Officers are present and alert.

It must be recognised that on no occasion can good troops with proper trench discipline be surprised, or driven out of a trench even when attacked by vastly superior numbers, five or six times as strong as the defenders.

H. DE B. DE LISLE,
Major General,
Commanding 29th Division.

10th July 1915.

Reference :- From a Royal Naval Division booklet. Reference (12) 29908 Wt21385 - P 1252
1000 9/5 E & S A. Admiralty Library, Mezzanine 3, Great Scotland Yard, London.

RECORDS & MUSTER ROLLS.

On the 13th May 1916 lists of officers serving the Royal Naval Division were submitted to Headquarters. (Each issue covers a different unit or Battalion.)

Machine Gun Company. 2nd Brigade.

Substantive Rank. Appointment.	Temp Rank.	Name.	Regiment.
O.C. 2 nd in Command.	Lieutenant.	H. E. Funnell.	R.N.V.R.
	Sub Lieutenant.	P. R. Wait.	R.N.V.R.
	Sub Lieutenant.	A. B. Spence.	R.N.V.R.
	Sub Lieutenant.	J. H. Brothers.	R.N.V.R.
	Sub Lieutenant.	J. Jeffrey.	R.N.V.R.
	Sub Lieutenant.	A. M. Dick.	R.N.V.R.
	Sub Lieutenant.	L. W. Barber.	R.N.V.R.
	Sub Lieutenant.	J.A. Black.	R.N.V.R.
	Sub Lieutenant.	G. Tomsen.	R.N.V.R.
	Sub Lieutenant.	E. M. Aron.	R.N.V.R.

Cavalry Corps Troops Supply Column.

Substantive Rank.	Temp Rank.	Name.	Regiment.
Lieutenant. 2 nd Lieutenant.	Captain.	W. H. Sealy.	A.S.C.
	Lieutenant.	E. Studdy.	A.S.C.
	2 nd Lieutenant.	B. M. Rusden.	A.S.C.
	Lieutenant.	H.M. Teyne.	A.S.C.
	2 nd Lieutenant.	W. Gilmour.	A.S.C.
Lieutenant.		W.N. Copeland.	A.S.C.

Cyclist Company.

Substantive Rank.	Temp Rank.	Name.	Regiment.
Major.		A. H. French.	R.M.L.I. (Temp attached Howe Bn.)
	Lieutenant.	C.A. Hepburn.	R.M.
	2 nd Lieutenant.	B. F. Scott.	R.M.
	2 nd Lieutenant.	R.H. Marsland .	R.M.
	Surgeon.	G. I. Ritchie.	R. N. (Attached)

Engineer Units.

Substantive Rank. Appointment.	Temp Rank..	Name.	Regiment.
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Headquarters.

C.R.E.	Lieutenant Colonel.	G.H. Harrison.	R.M.
Acting /Adjutant.	Lieutenant	G.M.C. Taylor.	R.M.
	Surgeon.	H. Padwick.	R.N.
Adjutant.	Lieutenant.	W. M. Gillespie.	R.E.

No. 1 Field Company.

O.C.	Captain.	J. W. Revall.	R.M.
	Lieutenant.	W. Beloe.	R.M.
	Lieutenant.	J. Brierley.	R.M.
	Lieutenant.	E. Nixon.	R.M.
	Lieutenant.	F. S. Gould.	R.M.

No. 2 Field Company.

O.C.	Major.	L. H. Rugg.	R.M.
2 nd in Command.	Captain.	J. Marshall.	R.M.
	Lieutenant.	W. F. Garnham.	R.M.
	Lieutenant.	V. Wheeler.	R.M.

No. 3 Field Company.

O.C.	Major.	T.C. Aveling.	R.M.
	Lieutenant.	R.S.A. Griffiths.	R.M.
	Lieutenant.	A.E.S. Wooldridge.	R.M.
	Lieutenant.	H. Molyneux.	R.M.

DIVISIONAL TRAIN.

Substantive Rank. Appointment.	Temp Rank.	Name	Regiment.
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Headquarters.

Lieutenant Colonel. O.C.		A.R. Liddell.	A.S.C.
S.S.O.	Major.	F. Holmes.	R.M.
Adjutant.	Lieutenant	G.J. Mulholland.	A.S.C.
	Surgeon.	W. R. E. Unthank.	R.N.
	Captain.	E.C. Sherman.	A.S.C.

No. 1 Company.

Captain.		C.O.F. Modin.	R.M.
Lieutenant.		J. Macoun.	R.M.
Lieutenant.		W. W. Primrose.	R.M.
Lieutenant.		E.T. Wilkins.	R.M.
Lieutenant.		V. King.	R.M.

No. 2 Company.

Captain.		C. G. Murray.	R.M.
Captain.		A.E. Balfour.	R.M.
Lieutenant.		R. V. Fuller.	R.M.
Lieutenant.		P. Allard.	R.M.
Lieutenant.		W.J. Balfour-Murphy.	R.M.

No. 3 Company.

	Captain.	C.L. Chapman.	R.M.
	Captain.	H.V. Scott-Willcox.	R.M.
	Lieutenant.	S.A. Middleton.	R.M.
	Lieutenant.	J. Killwick.	R.M.
	Lieutenant.	V.C. Newman.	R.M.
V.O. Attached.	Lieutenant.	J.C. Broad.	R.M.

No. 4 Company.

Captain		F.W. Tisley.	R.M.
Captain.		J. Goring.	R.M.
Captain		L.M. Murdoch.	R.M.
Lieutenant.		A.H. Sayer.	R.M.
Lieutenant.		F. Collins.	R.M.

MEDICAL UNIT.

Substantive Rank. Appointment.	Temp Rank.	Name.	Regiment.
Staff Surgeon. O.C. 1 st Field Ambulance.		A. F. Fleming.	R.N.
	Surgeon.	J. R. Kay-Mount.	R.N.V.R.
	Surgeon.	E. G. Schlesinger.	R.N.
	Surgeon.	J. A. Walker.	R.N.
	Surgeon.	J. R. Adam.	R.N.
	Surgeon.	E. F. Cox.	R.N.
Quartermaster.	Lieutenant.	G. L. Williams.	R.M.
Staff Surgeon. O.C. 2 nd Field Ambulance.		C.E.C. Stanford.	R.N.
	Surgeon.	G. A. Sewell.	R.N.V.R.
	Surgeon.	A. H. Crock.	R.N.V.R.
	Surgeon.	A. Gow.	R.N.
	Surgeon.	C. F. Mayne.	R.N.
	Surgeon.	T. C. Blackwell.	R.N.
	Surgeon.	C. H. S. Taylor.	R.N.
	Surgeon.	G. Sparrow.	R.N.
	Surgeon.	R.H. Knowles.	R.N.
Quartermaster.	Lieutenant.	J. G. Murray. J.G.	R.M.
O.C. Sanitary Sec.	Surgeon.	E.S. Calthorp.	R.N.
	Surgeon.	McCracken W.J.	R.N.
Surgeon.		J.S. Ward.	R.N.

SIGNAL COMPANY.

Substantive Rank. Appointment.	Temp Rank.	Name.	Regiment.
O.C.	Major.	G.H. Spittle.	R.M.
	Lieutenant.	C. Bollam.	R.M.
	Lieutenant.	T.N. Riley.	R.M.
	Lieutenant.	S.F. Mort.	R.M.
Att to 3 rd Bde H.Q.	Lieutenant.	H.M. Bamford.	R.M.
Att to 2 nd Bde H.Q.	Lieutenant.	H.T. Aylott.	R.M.

Reference :- Public Record Office, Kew. WO32/5075.

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Note :- This completes the series of the list of officers serving in the Division on the 3rd May 1916.

The lists were completed and forwarded by W.D. Bird the D.S.D.

* * * * *

GALLIPOLI & WESTERN FRONT.

Note:- Lieutenant A.P. Herbert of the Hawke Battalion had published in 1916, as part of his poetry book 'Half-Hours at Helles' a poem '*To James*' (*On his appointment to the Staff at Imbros.*) This was later to appear in the R.N.D. magazine 'The Mudhook' number 2 of November 1917, that was published on the Western Front.. This later publication of the poem stirred a defender of 'The Staff' to respond, as it appears that A.P. Herbert had ruffled the feathers of this *esteemed* group of officers.

TO JAMES

(On his Appointment to the Staff)

By Lieutenant A.P. Herbert.

It does not make me laugh and whoop
 (Though certainly the choice *is* droll)
To hear that you are asked to stoop
To join that great malignant group;
 I hasten to condole.
Not for your frame I fear - ah, no,
For, far as creature comforts go,
They lack but little here below:
 I shudder for your soul.

I know that when the seas are rude
 And people's parcels long delayed,
No hint of trouble shall intrude
Where your select and frequent food
 Is delicately laid;
That, though the sweet Imbrosial hens
Abruptly perish in their pens,
Your eggs will not, like other men's
 Be absent from parade.

I know the neighbourhood is rich
 In sandbagged shelters, cutely packed,
 Yet if there be some special niche,
 The perfect kind of cranny which
 We hitherto have lacked,
 Where man may shun the shells of man
 (And also Asiatic Anne),
 'Twill be but part of some huge plan
 For keeping you intact.

I fear for you no foeman's knife,
 But fear to see on that fresh face
 The lofty look of one whose life
 Is quite remote from earthly strife
 (Though that will be the case);
 I dread the perilous abyss
 Of being *sui generis*,
 And looking with some prejudice
 On any other race.

I fear, yet hope, that after all,
 If e'er you tread, supremely vast,
 The lowly drain wherein we crawl,
 You'll have the kindness to recall
 Some fragment of the past;
 For some wee while confess the sin
 Of merely earthly origin,
 And not refuse a genial grin
 For fear of losing caste. (1)

* * * * *

Note:- Regarding verse 2 please see R.N.D. issue 8, page 726. This refers to the R.N.D. HQ on the Island of Imbros.

In Issue 3 - January 1918. A reply was received under the heading “Correspondence.”

THE MALIGNED.

Sir, - Whoever A. P. H. may be, I care not a button. Granted he can press out his poor paltry soul facetious doggerel of a sort, and you may think it funny enough to publish, but when it comes to calling our Staff a “great malignant group”, I in my turn, “hasten to condole”.

I condole with the wretched rhymist on his ignorance, or is it - his disappointment in having failed to get on the Staff, and with you on your lack of discernment in not knowing your constituents, which is the first essential of a journalist. You may vilify great men once or twice knowing that they are too noble to sing their own praises, but believe me, the great public of the R.N.D. on whose good will you exist, will not stand it for long.

And therefore, in sorrow rather than anger, I advise you instantly to adopt another attitude.

Yours faithfully
A WELL-WISHER.

However A.P. Herbert was not the type of man to be brow beaten into submission and he responded to this veiled threat with the publication in ‘The Mudhook’ number 4 of March 1918 with another poem called ‘The chain of Responsibility’. It was later to be published in ‘The Bomber Gipsy’ published 2nd Edition in 1919 by Methuen & Co Ltd.

THE CHAIN OF RESPONSIBILITY.

By A.P. Herbert.

(“These, aided by their Staff and assistants, convey his will to ... subordinates under them, each of whom carries it down still lower, until eventually all ranks are controlled by it. “FIELD SERVICE REGULATIONS.)

All night the tempest howled about the
 camp,
 And through the tent flaps filtered in the
 damp.
 The Brigadier woke up and saw no sun;
 His eggs were cold; his bacon was not done;
 And, to express his reasonable pique
 At being born into a world so bleak,
 He spake as tartly as a General can
 To Major Thingummy, his right-hand man;
 Who, well aware no negligence of his
 Deserved just then these high-toned blas
 phemies,
 Took horse and galloped with a heart in flame
 Till he encountered Colonel Whatshisname;
 To whom in terms not reverent but frank,
 Such as to persons of superior rank,
 But not upon the Staff, the staff may use,
 The Major stingingly expressed his views
 On how the Colonel or his dastard force
 Had for a week possessed an extra horse.
 The Colonel, lamb-like, heard the harsh critique
 (He simply could not trust himself to speak),
 But, spurring home, not lamb-like in the least,
 Addressed his Adjutant about the beast;
 Who, hushed and hurt, confessed the horrid
 crime
 (But knew his chief had known it all the
 time),
 Went out and sought for somebody to err,
 And found, of course, the Transport Officer,
 A happy person, who from day to day
 Did all his duties in the wrongest way -
 Yet, gentle youth, however wild with whim,
 Not often people could be cross with him.
 But, in this case, so mortified his mind,
 The Adjutant was *pleased* to be unkind.
 The astonished victim, on the hallowed plan,
 Relieved his feelings on the nearest man,
 And duly visited with words of doom
 An unattractive but contented groom,
 With tuneful sibilance and studious care
 Engaged in polishing the surplus mare;
 His whistle finished, and with needless force
 He raised his boot and kicked the smiling
 horse.
 Under the belly - and it smiled no more ...
 And one more day was added to the War.

Lieut A. P. Herbert.

GALLIPOLI.
ABLE SEAMAN
THOMAS MACMILLAN.
BENBOW BATTALION.

Part 2. Into Battle.

The Benbow Battalion was shortly to land at Gallipoli. It was to suffer a short and unhappy history, having, after the Antwerp Expedition had most of its number interned in Holland. It was reformed, following the 2nd and 3rd Brigades to the Turkish Peninsula, together with the Hawke and Collingwood Battalions. But its period as a battalion would be short lived. It appears the troops were to be poorly lead and after the Battle of the 4th of June the Battalion was disbanded. This was due to major losses in the other brigades. But, also I feel, Major General Paris was not sorry to see it pass into history, as he was to write about the Battalion, in a personal letter to his friend in England, in somewhat derogatory terms. (1)

Transports conveying the remainder of our Brigade duly arrived, and with them came smaller ships of the cargo class. One of these, *H.M.S. Hythe*, moored alongside the *Ivernia* and into it we were transferred. Parting from the *Ivernia* was like taking leave of an old friend whom we might never see again. She had played her part well in bringing us safely from the Homeland through dangerous seas to our appointed place. Later we learned with genuine concern that she had been torpedoed, and the pious hope of all was that the old gentleman, her Captain, and the fine old Doctor had been spared.

There was an amazing assembly of warships in the harbour when *H.M.S. Hythe* moved off. On passing them cheering crews lined the decks while their bands played that most inspiring of all our war songs, "Rule Britannia." We were struck dumb at first and then, singing as men inspired, the chorus was repeated again and again and cheer answered cheer until we reached the boom once more when silence was enjoined. Here we remained till nightfall, and, in the darkest of dark nights, set out for Gallipoli. All had to remain

standing throughout the passage, for the deck space was so restricted that it was impossible to lie down. The sun had just risen when our boat arrived off the Peninsula, and all were grateful for the warmth he sent in advance. Even for the Scots the night had been uncharitably cold. Drawing close in to barges which had been used in the Landing, the *Hythe* dropped anchor, and using the barges as a gangway we landed at 'V' beach in full sight of the *S.S. River Clyde* which played such a gallant role in the early fighting. Nearby the upturned bottom of a British warship loomed out of the sea; it looked for all the world like a sea monster asleep.

Once ashore, a good deal of official nonsense tried our patience. We were kept standing so long that some of the younger boys had to assume a stooping posture to ease the strain of the equipment on their backs and shoulders, and tempers were ruffled before orders were given to move off by Companies. As we climbed the cliff, marvelling the while that soldiers were able to make a landing at such a place, the smell of bacon frying cheered us no end for each and all were furnishing of hunger, and the smell foretold good things to come.

Every bit of ground held our interest, but what intrigued us most was the phenomenal number of eyes peering out of holes big and small on every side. Some looked scared, some curious, and many mischievous. The mischievous eyes seemed to say "wait my bonny boys, till you have been as long at this business as we have been and you won't look so pretty." Soon after clearing the cliff head we came under fire. Watchful eyes on Achi Baba had found a good target and the guns let fly. The shells screamed over our heads, but beyond a significant glance at each other and a sudden cessation of chatter, no symptoms of funk were observable. The range seemed faulty, but as one salvo beat the dust in our immediate rear the order was given to double and take cover in some dead ground. To halt and dig in was out of the question as every patch of ground had holes enough and none to spare. Marching on, almost beaten down by heat and fatigue and sweating like bulls, we came at last to the patch of earth reserves for the Benbow Battalion, and there we gladly shed our equipment and stretched our aching limbs.

A ration of bully beef and biscuits soon disappeared, and then arose a cry for water. The torrid heat had created a thirst which any "drouthy crony" could have had for the asking. Water parties went off and fortunately they soon returned with a fairly good supply. Hunger and thirst being appeased for the time being all ranks set to work to prepare quarters in the ground for the night; but as there were neither picks nor shovels available each man had to make the most of his entrenching tool. Fortunately the soil was soft and our task was lightened considerably, but as there was no one competent to instruct us in the work, each man dug his hole as he thought fit. Mine resembled a mummy's coffin. When I lay down to sleep I had for head cover not more than a foot of earth, and, in my innocence, I believed that this would afford me all the protection I required from stray bullets or wandering shells.

Although tired out I was slow to fall asleep, for the stars in the heavens were so bright and attractive and the Milky Way had, for the first time, justified its name. Resting my head on an improvised pillow with a 'bone' in it I could hear the rat-tat-tat of a machine gun and bursts of rifle fire ahead. The front, I was to learn, never slept. We had arrived in good time for the evening 'hate' and this also gave me a little food for thought, although our sector was not the chosen one on this occasion. Sleep triumphed at last, and I woke with the new day much refreshed, and just in time to hear the Turkish guns bark out their morning 'hate'. I could see the messengers of death at work in a nearby sector and, in common with my comrades, I wondered when we might expect a visitation and who would be the first among us to be called to his Eternal home.

An inspection of our handiwork disclosed the too obvious fact that our holes were not nearly good enough. Some picks and shovels had made their appearance and each in turn secured the use of them. Tunics were shed and shirt sleeves cut off as we applied ourselves with zeal to the improvement of our trenches. Now and again we got a reminder of the necessity for expediency in the form of bursting shells, but towards the close of the day all seemed satisfied with the results achieved, and, keeping within battalion bounds, we spent an agreeable hour or two conversing with friends. The time for "piping down" arrived, and soon the battalion lines showed no sign of life. The feeling of fatigue which had settled on us after leaving Mudros was slowly wearing off, and after a second night of blissful rest we rose a cheerful company.

Work and movement went on apace and for our pains we received a special "hate" all to ourselves. Shells burst over our heads and splinters flew everywhere about. At first the onslaught was met with grins and smiles, but these changed to looks of mingled determination and concern as the firing continued. When the "hate" faded out all hastened to ascertain the price which had been paid and were relieved to observe that we had got off lightly. Here and there was a reeling man with one or two lying prone. They were all in life but one, the youngest of us all. He and his twin brother were buglers to the battalion, and when ordered to stay behind at Blandford on account of their age, they set up such a crying match that it was decided to allow them to accompany the battalion. The grief of the boy who was left was pitiful to see and he was returned to England.

French Senegalese.

Our interest in doings forward was now increasing. The firing seemed to become more hysterical, especially at night, and I observed that the noise proceeded almost entirely from the right sector of the line which was held by French coloured troops from Senegal. On that sector also, trailing star shells were ever in the air. They were of such a brilliant kind that they lit up almost every yard of No Man's Land and cast their shafts of light well to the rear. This policy, it appears, had to be adopted to keep the Senegalese in good heart, as they were inclined to panic. I was keen to become better acquainted with the pot-black

boys from Northern Africa. As the Royal Naval Division held the centre of the allied line with the Senegalese on their right, the respective rest camps were pitched together but we were forbidden to fraternise. For some of our merchant seaman, however, the Senegalese camp was much too convenient. They had learned how to filch jam and other tasty things from the Quarters-master's stores without being detected and had come to know that the French colonials were seldom short of red wine. Bartering went on apace, and on one of the expeditions I was a member of our party. We arrived in time to see some of the Senegalese obtain new boots and clothing, and I was highly amused at the joy they expressed when trying the new things on. Most of them spoke French, but although they had been inoculated with a little European culture they were simple in mind as unspoilt children.

During our sojourn in the rear I could not fail to notice the ever increasing activity of all units, for the field of operations was so restricted that every movement of any importance caught the eye. Close to our quarters were the lines of the famous 'L' battery which had done so well in France in the early days of the fighting; but the unit most strongly represented was the Royal Army Medical Corps, which, like the Naval Division was composed mainly of volunteers. Our Division had been singularly fortunate in securing for its medical unit fine fellows from the Northern Counties of England, many of whom had qualified for the Long Service medal of St John's Ambulance Association. So far as I could see there were few youngsters amongst them and all seemed to be taking their job seriously. It was well for them and us that they did so; for while on other fields of battle it may have been true that the job of R.A.M.C. was comparatively free from risk, this was not the case on Gallipoli. There, ambulances were as rare as golden sovereigns, and the transport of the wounded from the Advanced Dressing Stations to the shocking Evacuating Hospitals, was, mainly by stretcher. Frequently I observed the men of the R.A.M.C. toiling on with their heavy burdens under a broiling sun, at each step sinking ankle deep in the shifting sand, and trying, too often in vain, to shield their charges and themselves from the flying fragments of the wicked "Jack Johnson" shells, which followed them continually.

Lice and Flies.

All ranks were now verminous; the lice had found us out and had arrived in mass formation. Every variety of anti-vermin specific had been brought from England, but they seemed to thrive on the powders and jellies which had been prepared for their extermination and there was nothing left for us to do to use our fingers. Providentially ant colonies abounded, and it was discovered later that lice were one of their pet aversions. Our shirts were therefore places over the ant's castles with marvellous results, but we had to be careful to see that all ants had been removed before dressing again, as we found to our cost that no flea could nibble like an outraged ant. In addition to the lice scourge we had to contend with almost every species of ground vermin, while the air above was alive

with flies which never ceased to pester us. These flies resembled the home variety only in shape and form; for speed of motion they were as the “Blue Bird” is to the growler. What they seemed to like best was human blood and excreta; they also had a liking for sweetened milk, and when we were fortunate enough to possess a tin of this precious liquid, it was well nigh impossible to keep them from tobogganing down the slender stream as it oozed from the punctured tin into the tea.

Swimming.

These were our plagues: but what a blessing it was that the sea lapped the shores of Helles, for without it, we should have gone through the whole campaign without a satisfactory wash. Before our initiation as soldiers proper, we enjoyed all the pleasures of sea bathing despite the ever present peril of being blown to bits by regular and well-directed shell fire from Turkish guns on the Asiatic coast.

First Advance by Benbow.

We had waited long for the call to action and one night it came with the approach of dusk. Our Company alone set out and halted in the Achi Baba Nullah at a place called Backhouse Post. Here we quartered in damp, crumbling trenches quite close to a military cemetery in the making. We soon became accustomed to the barking of a British battery perched on the edge of the cliff over-head and to the irritating “waka, waka, waka,” of frogs which infested the stream flowing down the Nullah, and were settling down for the night when an infernal din arose ahead. Our Commander spread the company over the stream, for he believed that the Turks were attempting a break-through. There we lay prone with magazines full and a faulty field of fire of not more than fifty yards. This happened at the time for battalion reliefs in the line, and men of our Second Brigade were walking through us, with the utmost composure, on their way to the fire trenches. One or two of them took the trouble to enquire who we were, and on being told, they asked, none too politely, what were we doing there. On satisfying their curiosity we were met with: “Get up you bloody fools; there will be no break-through to-night or any other night.” It seemed that they were right, for we were assembled and ordered to our trenches.

Photographs on opposite page :-

Above :- Gallipoli, fish killed by the gun Asiatic Annie. Imperial War Museum Reference Q 13344.

Below :- The Backhouse Post, the well known base of the Royal Naval Division's 2nd Brigade. Situated near the stream, the Achi Baba Nullah and Observation Hill. Commodore Backhouse can be seen standing in the foreground. Please see the notes at the back of this article. Imperial War Museum, Department of Documents, Reference Doc 385.



This was followed by a call for volunteers to the strength of a platoon and I “fell in.” We marched smartly into the main communication trench which led to the front line, and were making good progress when we were held up suddenly by troops ahead, and closed in behind by troops following. We could neither advance nor retreat, and the utmost confusion prevailed. The fiasco was ended by the officer in charge of the troops in the rear getting out of the trench on to the parapet and ordering us back to our quarters. As it was impossible to return by the communication trench we were taken into the open. By a stroke of good fortune the Turkish fire had tapered off so the volunteers marched back in column of fours feeling very sick at being involved in such a foolish enterprise. The need for breaking step at such a time and place did not occur to us; but this was soon corrected when, on passing some dead ground we suddenly came on a company of old hands, who greeted us with the chorus we had all learned at the Crystal Palace:

At the halt on the left form platoon;
At the halt on the left form platoon;
If the odd numbers don't mark time two paces,
How the Hell can the rest form platoon?

This was followed by wild shouts of “break your steps you silly buggers” and, of course, we instantly obeyed. On reaching Backhouse Post we found the remainder of the Company sound asleep with not even a sentry posted. Our party was glad to lie down, for the night had been a tiring one and our faith was somewhat shaken.

Next morning the officers presented a sorry spectacle as the Company returned under orders to the rest camp. Our Company Commander had meant well. He had yet to learn that when reinforcements were required they would be called for, and that it was generally considered imprudent for any junior officer to act on his own initiative even if it proved to be the right thing to do. Later in the day Lieutenant Green looked his old self again and, as we moved off with picks and shovels in addition to “battle order” it was evident that we were about to perform the task which we had set out to accomplish the previous evening. Again we marched up the Nullah but this time in single file. Without halting we proceeded by way of a main communication trench to the immediate Support Line where, without a word of explanation we were paired - one with a pick and one with a shovel - and hurried into the open. Willie Mitchell was my mate, and as it was very dark we took the precaution of joining hands in order not to stray. We had take only a few steps when we stumbled over two of our officers taking cover under the parados. Peering into the darkness we saw a thin black line of our men ahead, and as we approached them the first man told us to get to the rear. We in turn told those following to do likewise. All duly arrived wondering what they had to do next, since there was no officer present to instruct. The question was settled for us when the Turks, hearing the noise we unfortunately created, sent up Very lights in profusion and began to hose the ground with machine gun bullets. No man waited for an order to start digging but set to work as he never worked before. Willie and I decided to take pick and shovel by turn. As if by instinct, we secured

as much head and body cover as possible by placing the earth between ourselves and the machine guns' line of approach. Fortunately the direction of the fire was not reversed, otherwise many more casualties would have been inflicted. Willie was a trifle nervy at first, for he had been beside poor Ferns when he was shot through the head coming up, but a few words of encouragement brought him to his senses and the deepening hole restored his self-composure.

During the hubub I observed only two officers - an Engineer officer and our Battalion Doctor. The call for stretcher bearers was continuous until sufficient cover was gained, and the gallant young doctor constantly exposed himself as he directed the rescue work. His example gave us all great heart, and when dawn arrived we had completed a communication trench to the satisfaction of the Engineer officer in charge. On filing out we passed our Company Commander looking pale and wan, and were taken in charge by our Platoon officer; but from that day onwards I lost sight of the fellows who took cover behind the parados when they should have been supervising.

Back we went to the Rest Camp, weakened but elated at having stood the test so well. On the way down young Eric Anderson kept close by my side. His keen eyes were roaming nervously about and could see only the unsightly things by the way. "Look, Mac, look," he exclaimed excitedly as he drew my attention to a line of horses which had been mangled by enemy artillery fire. I took a firm hold of the boy and in a kindly way replied; "Yes, Eric, its horrible to think that the poor beasts should have suffered as they have done, but let us both take a good look so that we may be able to face scenes like these and still be able to carry on. At this his face brightened and he manfully pulled himself together. On reaching camp I met an excellent lad named Watson who had just arrived from Alexandria. He told me he had been employed there as a first class writer with the rank of petty officer, but that on account of the loose living and general depravity of the place, he felt so ill at ease that he insisted on reverting to the rank of able seaman and asked to be sent to Gallipoli. I gave him a fair account of the Battalion and all that had been done and at the same time asked him to keep an eye on young Popham, while I took young Eric under my wing. This he willingly consented to do.

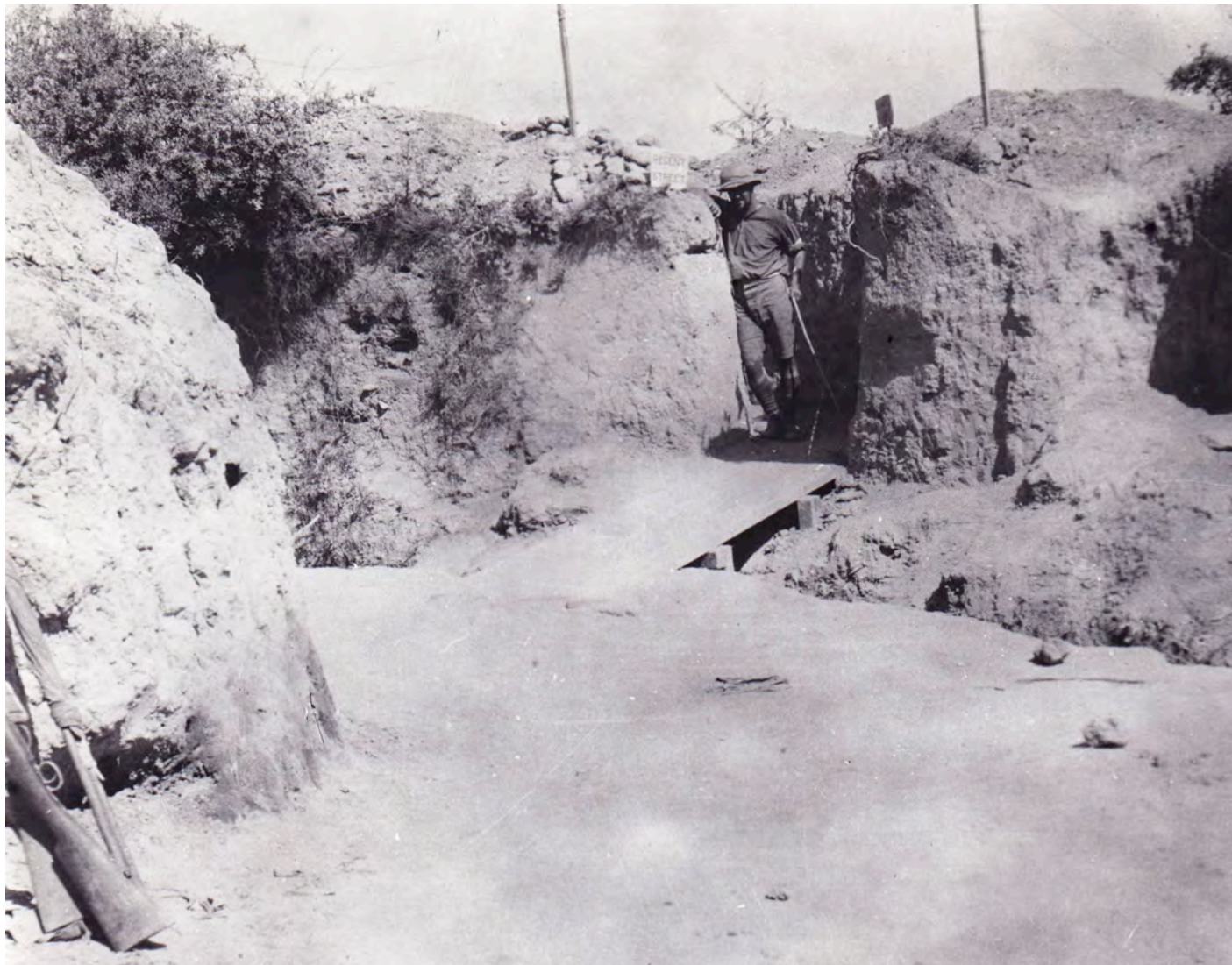
Photographs over the page :-

To the left :- Surgeon John Boswick, R.N. in Oxford Street Communication Trench, Helles. R.N. Division. Taken by Lieutenant Commander Hedderwick of the Hood Battalion. Imperial War Museum. Reference Q 14817.

Upper right :- Entrance to Regent Street Communication Trench, Helles. R.N. Division. Taken by Lieutenant Commander Hedderwick of the Hood Battalion. Imperial War Museum Reference Q 14816.

Lower right :- Lieutenant Spencer Warwick R.N.V.R. Bringing in 'C' Company Auson Battalion, after 14 days in constant fighting on the right of the R.N.D. line. He and most of his men were killed on the 4th June 1915. From Antwerp and the Dardanelles by Rev H.C. Foster.





Battle of the 4th June 1915. (3rd Battle of Krithia.)

Work parties kept us busy for a few days, but on the evening of the 3rd June, preparations on a large scale were proceeding. We were again taken forward for a comparatively light fatigue and returned to camp in the gloaming. That evening I saw Commander Spearman of the Collingwood Battalion and what appeared to be his Company Commanders and Adjutant returning from a visit to the Front Line trenches. He looked composed but deep in thought as he walked on with hands clasped behind his back. I could not refrain from looking after him, for the Commander had always appealed to me as a man of fine courage and wisely sympathetic ways. It was the last I was to see him and his fine Battalion.

Next morning there was an uncanny stir all over the lower end of the Peninsula while the “morning hate” was more diffused and more prolonged. The Turks seemed to sense that there was trouble brewing. Exactly at 10.0 a.m. and without the slightest warning, all the guns in the Allied camp opened fire. We were up like a shot looking on. As the visibility was excellent and the nearest enemy lines were not more than three miles off, we could see the shells bursting and the dust which they created rising in clouds. Our fire increased in intensity, and was supported by fire from our ships at sea. It seemed impossible for anything to live in such an inferno.

The ‘morning hate’ had faded out and the Turkish guns appeared to be subdued, when all of a sudden out they range and shell after shell came flying our way. The order, “Take cover and put on equipment” was rapped out and instantly obeyed. As the fire abated we popped up but it was now impossible to see anything ahead for dust. Our guns again opened up and the Turks retaliated. Salvo after salvo flew over us with screeching whistle and swish, and I felt that numbness of spine which I understand almost every soldier feels when under sustained shell fire. The fire eventually cleared and we were ordered to move forward in file. Every man stood his height and walked out of the trench like a veteran.

Maintaining a steady double, we soon reached Achi Baba Nullah again. Here the scene baffled description. The Turks did not seem to be taking any notice of our battery on the Nullah’s edge. They knew that our reinforcements would pass that way and they blasted the place with high explosive shells. We were now part of a long line which kept running on. As we ran, man after man was brought to the ground and we had to jump over their bodies. On each flank streams of our wounded were making for the rear in pitiable plight. Some were falling exhausted and there was none to help. Others were hobbling on in agony and receiving fresh wounds from the fiendish shrapnel, while many received the blow that laid them low for all time.

Instead of halting at Backhouse Post we switched into a long trench running at right angles to it. This trench was in a sad state of disrepair, but it afforded us excellent cover, not so much from artillery fire as from a back-wash of machine gun and rifle fire which showered down like hail. Again we were ordered to move, and keeping close to the right

of the Nullah we reached the mouth of a communication trench. The road was clear and up we went at full gallop. When everything seemed set fair we were brought up with a jolt at a trench junction and further progress became impossible. Our Chief Petty Officer investigated the cause of the block and I understood him to say when passing that the trench was full of stretcher cases ahead and that it was an utter impossibility to get through. The column was reversed but on retracing our steps another jam occurred. With some others I was forced into an earthwork which had all the appearance of an ammunition dump. Here we found a number of our men round the Colonel who had been shot in the arm. On getting into the trench again we connected and were led up another communication trench which bore more to the left and seemed close to the Nullah. There was a constant stream of wounded coming down and stretcher cases broke our formation. Eventually we reached the Support, then the Immediate Support and at long last arrived at the head of the communication trench where for the first time I observed an insignificant wooden cross bearing the fateful words: "Fire Trench." A strange feeling pervaded my whole body as I glanced at the sign. It may have arisen from the sudden realisation that at this point I had to prepare for anything that might befall me. I scanned the faces of my comrades and could trace unmistakable evidence that they also had received the same intimation. Our Company filed into the Fire Trench which was held by an English unit. Heavy casualties had weakened them considerably and those left standing had that fatalistic expression on their faces which conveyed all too forcibly the state of mind of men who knew that they could not dodge the bullet or shell "which had their number on it." They were so tired out that they scarcely recognised us, while we in turn were not too sprightly, for it was now dark and we had been on the move all day. It had been a gradual ascent to this Fire Trench so that the Turks were on higher and more commanding ground. As we stood waiting orders, a constant stream of shells from our guns seemed to skim the parapet. It was diverting to watch them do the last lap. By looking fixedly ahead I could see what appeared to be small balls of fire hissing past, and seconds later spreading their venom a short distance in front. Higher up "the heavies" were screeching as they passed to and fro, while to complete the scene, Turkish Whizz-bangs were spraying their contents over our Front and Immediate Support trenches. This had been going on all day and taking toll on both sides.

We were soon familiar with our surroundings and were beginning to wonder what was to follow when the familiar "Pass the word along" warning preceded the following message from Petty Officer Fry: "Is there a Benbow Officer in the line?" The message passed from one to another with due caution until it reached the man on the extreme left who replied: "No Benbow officer in the line." This was followed by another message: "Petty Officer Fry is on the right and will take charge of the Benbows." Fry came along to show himself. He stopped and spoke a few words with me, explaining that he had reported to an officer of an English unit and had been instructed to wait further orders. He looked every inch a hero, and was as calm and self-possessed as the most hardened campaigner.



First Platoon, A Company, Drake Battalion, parading in sunken road at Cape Helles area, prior to going into the line. Only a few had the short Lee-Enfield at this period. Some of the men shown here were killed or wounded. Imperial War Museum. References :- Q 50518 above and Q 50517 below.

The night was far advanced when Fry returned, this time with an officer of a Field Company of Engineers. They had started numbering from the left and the party required included me. The officer unfolded his scheme, which was to the effect that we were to go into No Man's Land and dig a communication trench to a position which had been consolidated in front of our Fire Trench and slightly to our left. This work had to be accomplished before dawn, otherwise the men holding the trench in front would have had to exist without water, throughout the following day. We were marshalled and led to a sap head, and before passing out were warned to fall flat every time the Turks put up Very Lights. No sooner had we cleared the sap than the first light ascended and down we flopped. Nothing happened, but the moment we started digging, light after light soared into the air and machine gun and rifle fire showered on us from all directions. Those who carried shovels used them for head protection, the blades being positioned, as if by instinct, at such an angle as to cause the bullets to ricochet. How and again I could hear stifled cries and dull moans as the bullets found a billet.

Up to this point our Field guns had been silent, but fire opened again, and as we were on rising ground the shells seemed to miss us by the narrowest margins. The dim they created served a two-fold purpose: It drowned the noise of our digging and dominated the Turks to such an extent that the periods between their bursts of fire were of much longer duration. We worked intensively, and after some hours of digging got down about four feet. This was considered good cover and just as dawn was breaking we crawled down the new trench to the sap from which we had emerged, to find it blocked with men sitting knee-locked in profound and peaceful slumber. Every artifice was used to rouse them in order to allow us through, but without success, for they appeared to be tired to the bone. If the Turks had come over they could have been carried off without the least fear of raising an alarm. At times, life on the field was so strenuous that when an opportunity to rest presented itself not a second's consideration was given to the place where one lay down. Tired out beyond all imagining, men would cast themselves down and sleep beside the dead and the dying.

When it was found impossible to clear the sap, the foremost of our party made a dash over the parapet and fell into the Fire Trench, but this was too risky a proceeding for all to attempt, the remainder had to crawl over the bodies of the sleepers. Dog tired we hobbled back to our Rest Camp much reduced in numbers, and I observed that Watson was not with us.

When I came to myself I was anxious to know what had happened during the battle and how our Division had fared. From my enquiries I learned that the Second Brigade had made the attack on the Divisional sector with the Senegalese on their right flank and the 42nd Lancashire Territorial Division on their left. By 12.15 p.m. the whole Turkish line which formed the first objective had been captured, and the Collingwoods had pressed forward to keep the Turks on the run. At this juncture the Turks launched a powerful counter-attack on the Senegalese who retreated, leaving our right flank exposed to

enfilade fire. Commander Spearman led his battalion into the breach, where they were enveloped in a curtain of fire, and of approximately one thousand men and twenty-seven officers who went forward only eighty-seven sound men and three officers answered the Roll Call. Thus did Commander Spearman and his gallant battalion pass out. The casualties sustained by the division were so serious and the hope of reinforcements so slender that it was decided to make up the strength of the other Brigades with what remained of the personnel of my Brigade.

The Benbow are disbanded and Macmillan was transferred to the Drake Battalion.

May parting with old comrades was a sad affair. Together with Fordham, Fry, Morton, Andrews, Rance, Mitchell, our war babies and others, I was transferred to the Drake battalion under Commander King, and had for Company Commander, Lieutenant Campbell, who, I was informed, was the son of the then Attorney General for Ireland. The change was welcome in this respect that the Drake Battalion seemed to be splendidly officered, and so it proved to be. We were not to see our old officers again. Lieutenant Green (2) died from the effects of a centipede bite over the eye, and Sub Lieutenant Iliff was killed in action soon after the change over. Green deserved a good deal of sympathy. His bad start seemed to unnerve him, and this could have been avoided if those in authority had taken the elementary precaution of ensuring that an officer going into the Fire area for the first time was given the assistance of an experienced officer until such times as he had a grasp of the situation.

As for Iliff, (3) I know not how he met his death, but his passing vexed us sorely. He was our first officer and, naturally, we were attached to him on this account. But, sentiment apart, he was one of the finest specimens of young manhood it was my privilege to meet on the field. Tall, handsome, well-informed, serious and not wanting in courage, just the type of officer our country most needed in the hour of her extremity. He had a premonition - the special favour which the Angel of Death reserved for brave men on the battlefield - and after preparing a farewell letter to his mother, he sent for one of his old boys and charged him to forward it on receipt of the news of his death.

There was a touch of comedy in the reception Fordham and I received on joining our platoon. We found our new associates in a very substantial trench, anxiously protecting their eatables from one of the many sand storms that added to the "delights" of living on the Peninsula. We were half-blinded and so were they, but their curiosity was strong enough to keep their eyes from closing altogether and their mouths as well. They looked a crowd of hardened sinners as they laughed when Fordham and I ventured a "good morning." Having once said "good morning" both of us felt we had to keep it up as we passed from one to another on our way to the top of the trench where we had to billet, and neither of us felt at all elated. There was something to be done to our corner of the trench in order to make it a little more comfortable. This we began to do when we were joined by one of the lads from further down the trench. Not wishing to impede us he sat on the top with his legs dangling into the trench and, speaking in the Yorkshire dialect,

immediately engaged us in conversation. He explained that the platoon was composed entirely of Yorkshire miners who had been drafted from the Yorkshire Light Infantry to the Naval Division in order that the Division might have men who could use a pick and shovel. In his crude way he apologised for the bad manners of the others, and proclaimed in a loud voice that if there was any more of it, they would have him to reckon with. Swainston, for that was the name of our newly found friend, soon proved that although he was rough and ready, he was honest and kindly disposed. Through his good offices we became better acquainted with the rest, of whom old Tommy, Quin, Dawes, Thackery, Greene and young Wormold attracted me most. All were natives of Rotherham, as coarse as the devil, but the right men for the job.

On the first day of my absorption by the Drakes I got my first job. Swainston must have told his friends that we were "good scholars" for he headed a deputation carrying a wooden cross. The cross had been beautifully executed but what stuck them was the finding of a suitable inscription. I asked them to tell me something about the boy Gregory, in memory of whom the cross had been made, and they told me a moving story of how the young hero met his death. I then set to work and produced an epitaph which seemed to give them no end of satisfaction. After patiently inscribing the words on the cross, they marched off to the cemetery at Helles to place it on the grave.

Fordham and I soon got to know our Petty Officer and Company Chief Petty Officer, but our platoon was without a Sub-Lieutenant on account of the heavy officer casualties in the recent fighting. The Petty Officer did not commend himself to any man in the platoon, But Pincher Martin, the Company Chief, was a hot favourite. He was an old sailor who had sailed many seas and had met all manner of men in all manner of circumstances. Part of his make up was a caustic tongue capable of making "Fly" men feel small, yet behind his shafts of withering wit was a kindly nature. The Battalion Chief on the other hand was a lithe little man and a trifle old for such a strenuous position, but being an old sailor too, he knew how to conserve his energy, and generally travelled along the line of least resistance. Chief Blanchard had most to do when out of the line. His first job was to waken the battalion in the morning and as he was always ahead of the sun there never was any fear of "sleeping in." The method he adopted was novel. Sensing that our tough platoon would give him most trouble, he called on them first of all. Armed with a healthy branch of a tree with plenty of leaves on it, he brushed the faces of his charges shouting the while "Wakee, wakee, rise and shine, the sun's burning your eyes out." Mingled groans and moans and worse fell from the lips of the sleepers, but only by standing bolt upright could they hope to escape a further dose of the enlivener.

At the conclusion of the spell of rest the Drakes moved off by companies to effect a relief in the line, each man carrying a pick or shovel in addition to his full equipment. It was dusty going, especially in the long communication trench, and we were glad to arrive. Our company took up position in the Immediate Support Trench and after a few days we moved forward to the Fire Trench and later back to the Support. The term of duty in the Fire area was usually ten days, while in the Rest Camp from seven to ten days were allowed.

Nº 5

REFERENCE.

- British Trenches ————
- French Trenches ————
- Turkish Trenches ————
- Communication Trenches ————
- Probable Turkish Machine Guns •
- Roads ————
- Tracks ————
- Watercourses ————
- Wire Entanglements * * * * *

DIAGRAM SHOWING ADVANCED TURKISH TRENCHES AND COMMUNICATIONS.

N.B.—The diagram is based on information available up to 5th July, 1915.
Reliance however, must not be placed on the diagram showing every Turkish Trench.

NOTE.—The relative positions of the trenches are correct within small areas, but the diagram should not be used to measure long distances or bearing.



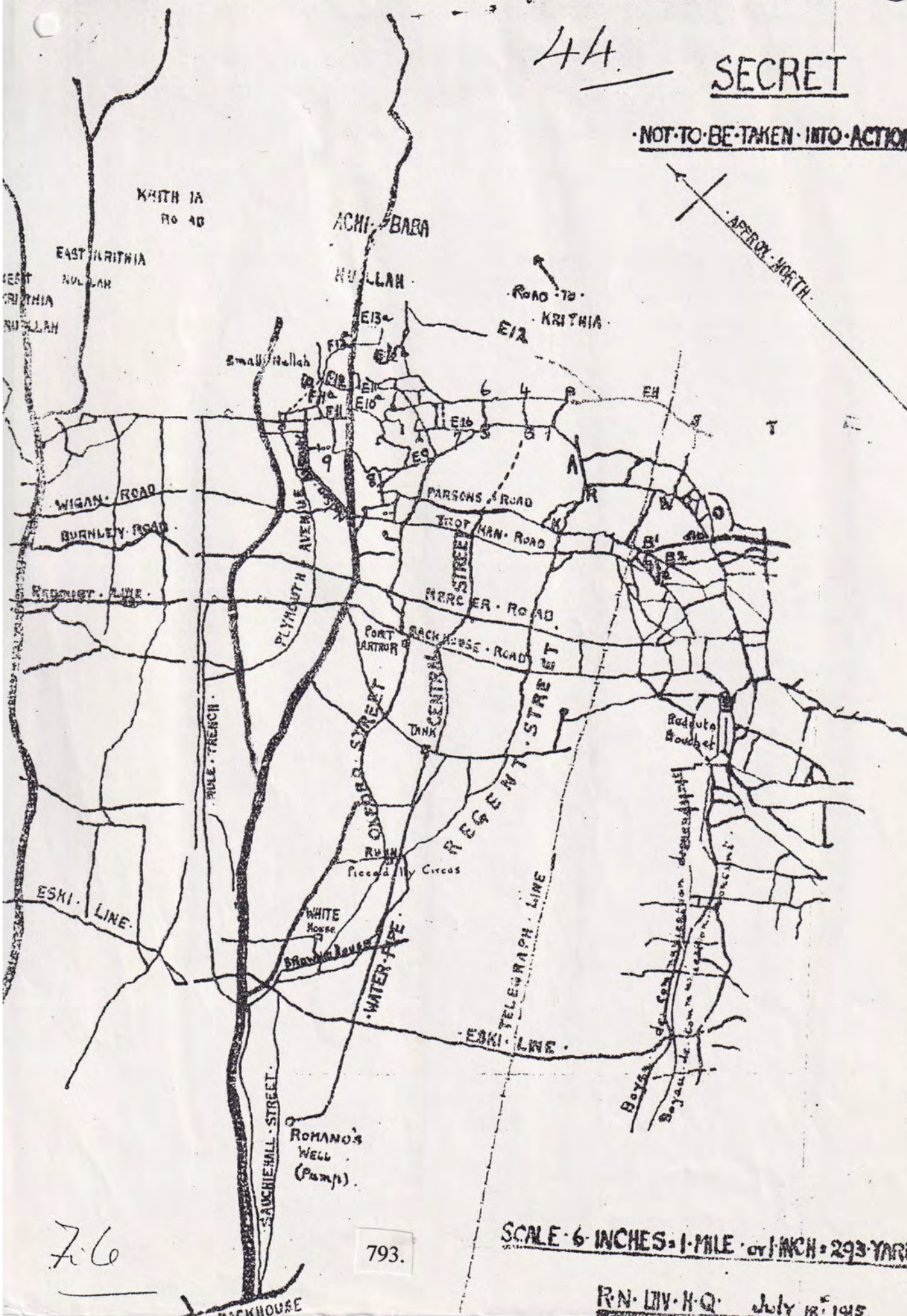


44

SECRET

NOT TO BE TAKEN INTO ACTION

158203.



7.6

793.

SCALE 6 INCHES = 1 MILE or 1 INCH = 293 YARDS.

RN DIV. H.Q. July 18⁵ 1915.

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I was intrigued with the routine of the Fire Trench and the excellent supervision of the Scout Officer, Lieutenant McGrath, (4) sad to relate, he was killed during this period. He was a restless little soul always on the alert in order to ascertain if the men on sentry duty had anything to report. On the day he met his death, he was following his usual practice of having a pop at any Turkish head which presented itself. In a Fire bay close to mine he stopped to observe and, seeing something to his liking, seized the sentry's rifle. Standing head and shoulders above the parapet he took deliberate aim and fired. While exposing himself to observe the effect of his shot a Turkish sniper got him through the head and he died on the way to hospital. The fire of the Turkish snipers seemed well-nigh perfect, they were accustomed to the clear visibility and their distance judging was almost faultless.

Apart from the occasional shelling nothing eventful happened. During the day sentry duty occurred once every four hours, and I spent most of my leisure time reading periodicals from home, Tennyson's poems, and other choice books. My miner chums were not readers and eschewing every form of sun-ray treatment, were to be found in holes and crevices with sandbags over their heads and sound asleep. I managed to read a good deal during the day, notwithstanding the fact that from "stand to arms" at dusk to "stand to arms" at dawn I had to conform to the rule of one hour on and one hour off.

Dysentery.

Dysentery was now beginning to make its presence felt, and two simple warriors, desiring to escape duties in the line, volunteered for latrine duty. Incidentally they let themselves in for one of the most unpleasant jobs on the Peninsula for, from that time onwards, all were conscious possessors of an alimentary canal. A further tax was imposed on our peace of mind was by the persistent chirping on "high doh" of grasshoppers, who seemed to be as prolific as the flies. Where there was a bit of vegetation there they were to be found messing about from sunset to sunrise. It was a God's blessing we were able to keep our mouths shut.

The change from the Fire area to Rest Camp was something to be thankful for; and as fatigues consisted only of one good task per day, we had ample time to refresh and relax. It is true that shells were seldom far away, but with an increasing stoicism, minor alarms were easily discounted. As a set of the many annoyances which we had to endure there was the fun which arose from the means adopted to dodge unpleasant experiences or to restore equanimity. Each one laughed at the other's little misfortunes and all in turn were chaffed. Unhappily we could not always laugh at the dysentery effects, although on one occasion Rance raised a howl. He had been kept on the trot all day and had got to the stage when it was considered imprudent to fasten the trousers. On one of his trips to the "bog" a sympathetic soul enquired where he was going in such a hurry. Rance's good temper failed him for once, he tartly retorted: "I am going to lay eggs." The "bog" or latrine lay close to the Battalion lines and consisted of a piece of ground about 50 yards square. A trench four feet by four feet was dug round it for deposits. There was neither

cover nor support so that the operation was always fraught with the unpleasant possibility of toppling in. Myriads of flies made the place their happy hunting ground, and myriads of them paid dearly for it, since it gave us no end of satisfaction to bury them when covering our outpourings, with sand. I had discovered the stump of an old tree on the verge of the latrine, which afforded support for my back, shade from the sun and a certain amount of protection from shell fragments. There I used to sit and read. One day, when engrossed in a book, I heard a shell-burst ahead, followed by an ominous screeching which denoted that there was a nasty blow-back approaching. The latrine had its full compliment of men in varying degrees of distress, and the blow-back got one of them in the arm-pit. The poor chap howled, "I'm hit, I'm hit," but continued under the spell of his dysentery attack, so commanding was the infernal scourge. On the cry being repeated one or two of us rushed to his assistance. We saw at once that he was badly wounded and hurried him off to the Field Dressing Station; but before we reached the place the wound had proved fatal. I too had my turn of dysentery, but by chance I discovered that by pounding dog biscuits and making a thick brose of them I soon enjoyed a comparatively normal bowel motions.

We were greatly helped to forget our troubles and afflictions by watching saucy little Commander Sampson being pursued in the air by half -a-dozen enemy aircraft: or as he tantalisingly drew upon himself the fire of almost every anti-aircraft battery in the Turkish camp, the while he observed their movements and directed our artillery fire. Although we were denied the pleasure of seeing him in the flesh, Sampson was our hero and inspiration until he went to sea again.

The next spell in the line was a little more interesting than the previous one. Our company went straight into the Fire Trench and was settling down nicely when the Battalion Second-in-Command arrived to inform the miners from Rotherham that they would be required for an important digging operation that night. In the fight on 4th June we had got ahead of the French thus leaving the right of our line "In the air." The task was to connect with the French and close the breach which, so long as it remained, constituted a serious menace both to the French and to ourselves. When the scheme was explained the Yorkshire men "went off the deep end." They turned on the officer and told him to get the "Froggies" to do the bloody job and that they would see themselves in Hell before they lifted a leg that night. They invited the Commander to put them in chains, or shoot if he thought fit. Hard looks and loud talking was of no avail. In the course of the argument they got the officer to admit that because they were miners they had received more than their share of dirty work. There seemed to be no way out of the impasse. Both parties had paused for breath when one of the men asked the officer how he would like to do the job. His face relaxed, and with a big smile he said: "I'll go with you and see it through." This offer was so unexpected that they were left speechless. The bargain was clinched, and an excellent piece of work was the outcome; but what gave. Most satisfaction was the fact that all returned unhurt.

On moving to the Reserve Trench, Sub Lieutenant MacLean was waiting to take charge of our platoon. He had been wounded in the early fighting and as he was well known to the Yorkshire men and highly respected, his arrival gave considerable satisfaction. All was very peaceful, but our officer took the opportunity to explain that the tranquillity might be of short duration as the French were committed to the serious undertaking of capturing what was called the "Haricot Redoubt" - a strong point which had held them up in the last fight. It was part of the plan that in the event of the French faltering we were to swing out to the right in support. When the officer left, the French were cursed up hill and down dale by the Yorkshiresmen. To add to their fury, rations had been poor during this term and I could not fail to notice that it was asking for trouble to put the men into a fight on empty stomachs. The bread ration for the day consisted of a pound loaf between four, but there was no storage of dog biscuits, which everyone heartily detested. The rashers of bacon which arrived were all rind, and the moment they were "dished up" there was an explosion of wrath; my commander, fumed afresh and outcursed any trooper. The Mediterranean was referred to as the Medite-bloody-ranean- and worse. I was wondering when the storm of abuse was going to end when young Wormold, a boy of eighteen, looking very grave, tore the rind off his rasher and, glancing over the parapet, indulged in the following conversation with an imaginary Turkish section leader:

"Hello Johnnie, are ye there?
You are, are you?
How many men are in your section ?
16, did you say?
Then share that among the buggers."

and he tossed the rind over the parapet. This brought the house down. It was the first time they had heard the youngster at it, and despite their hunger and ill humour, their laughter was loud and long.

Soon after, the fight began. As usual the Turks were subjected to a very heavy bombardment and they retaliated both on the French and on ourselves. Their shells were clearing our Immediate Support but as the distance from that trench to the reserve was unusually long, they fell short of our position. Providentially our trench was almost ideal, and fragments, big and small, made little impression on the parapet. The French were successful, and in preparation for their counter-attack, the Turks laid down a heavy barrage which again fell short, but the splinters were now more dangerous, and a nose cap so seriously wounded Sub-Lieutenant MacLean in the head, that he had to be evacuated for a second time.

The welcome call to quit the line came none too soon, for the summer sun was at its height and the trenches were as hot as ovens. A mouthful of air could be got in communication trenches, but as they were in almost constant use, the trampling created a

powered dust which was much more easily disturbed than allayed. Everybody longed for Hennes and breathing space. There was also a strong desire on the part of the old "Drakes" to prove or disprove the latest buzzes or rumours, for they were tiring and losing heart; they felt that they could not go on fighting against incalculable odds indefinitely. For want of vegetable food the skin on our hands and arms had become pasty, and every sore turned septic. One buzz predicted that our Division was to be taken off to the island of Imbros for goat's milk and vegetables; another, that reinforcements had arrived to permit this being done.

On our way to the rear we passed through the 52nd Lowland (Territorial Division.) This disposed of buzz No. 2. to our satisfaction, and gave grounds for hope that the Imbros project would materialise. But buzz No. 1 was too good to be true. At first we found the men of the Lowland Division good companions. The skirl of the bagpipes was much appreciated until it was discovered that one of the band's functions was to waken the Scots in the morning with "Hey Johnnie Cope are ye waukin yet." This was sufferable on the mornings when our Regimental Chief got in first with his "Wakee, wakee, rise and shine," but when the pipers stole a march on him, civil war was prevented by the fortunate circumstances that the respective camps were not pitched together.

The order to keep within Battalion bounds was now ignored. At every opportunity we wandered rather aimlessly about, seeking distraction. During my peregrinations I made a most interesting discovery. Nearby I heard someone singing a Salvation hymn. On nearer approach I observed a young man standing alone with a Moody and Sankey hymn book in his hand while a small pile of hymn books lay on the ground, beside him. What seemed to me even more strange was the fact that he belonged to one of our battalions: I was surprised to find his like in a combatant unit. When he had finished singing the hymn, he prayed and thereafter proceeded to preach, calling on all to repent and be reconciled to God. There was a lump in my throat as I listened to the well meaning and solitary lad, for I was the only person to pause and listen. The rough and refined alike merely glanced his way and passed on. His point of view was very familiar to me, and although it was not unholy in harmony with my own I wondered why all passed by, and how their immediate spiritual needs were satisfied. I had to resign my quest, however, for I found that the ways of Providence on the field of battle were past finding out. It seemed mercifully kind that young men should go as lambs to the slaughter; for when the blow that exterminated all light did fall it was the easier to bear, or so it seemed to me when I looked on the dead. In time the lad ceased to hold his meetings, and I could only conclude that he had been called to his Eternal home; for although I enquired diligently concerning him I could find no one who knew of his whereabouts. On my return to camp I told Fordham of my experience

and, a Sunday intervening, he planned a little hymn singing on his own account. The good fellow succeeded in securing a fair supply of an excellent Y.M.C.A. production and, sitting on a little mound of earth, a fair company of the "Drakes," including the hard cases, sang many of the well known hymns in the collection.

In this and other ways we passed the time until we found ourselves in the line again. The sun was now oppressively hot, and after a freakish rainfall, which passed over us and returned to repeat the dose, the trenches were baked rendering the outer earth as hard as stone. Our first Brigade had made ground during their term in the line, and we were led into a front line trench with a poor field of fire. The Turkish dead were lying about in large numbers, small groups of them lay at the foot of our parapet in every conceivable posture. There was a group in front of my fire step, and I observed that in almost every case the head was thrown back and the mouth wide open. This seemed to indicate that they had been shot on reaching the top of our parapet and had fallen backwards, the shock of the shot or the fall parting the jaws. Into the gaping mouth the flies poured and out of the gaping mouths on to us they came. Through exposure to the sun the bodies had swollen considerably, and the smell which issued from them was the smell of dead men half cooked. These unfortunate Turks not only seemed big, handsome, fresh young men, but their equipment was a revelation; nothing finer have I seen on any field of battle. Our Battalion Second-in-Command thought it advisable to search them, and when it was dark I assisted in bringing a number of them into the trench. After the search was completed they were carried over the parapet again, but for days it was impossible to get rid of what they had left behind. The flies were after the fragments but it was left to us to destroy the mawks which had fallen from the bodies in the handling. We learned that the dead men belonged to the Ottoman Guard and were shock troops. They caught the Ansons unprepared, but had been well beaten in the counter-attack, in which the Ansons were ably led by the old Second-in-Command of the Benbow battalion.

The Turks handled their dead with great respect. It seemed to be their practice to come out under cover of darkness and secure as many as possible for decent burial. We found to our costs, however, that their snipers occasionally used the dead in No Man's land for body cover. The first to discover this trick unfortunately fell a victim to a sniper's bullet. One of our old hands was on sentry duty, and on looking out he observed a sniper resting his rifle on a dead man. He informed his mate, and asked him to keep a look out while he laid aim and fired. The shot wounded the Turk, but before our man could withdraw another sniper got him through the head. The wounded Turk was seen to draw himself slowly to a sap head and was finished off, but our second marksman had also been too late in withdrawing and he in turn suffered the same fate as his companion. Both were buried behind our parapet; but although in life they were inseparable in death a layer of earth kept them apart in order to satisfy the requirements of the rival Christian clergymen who performed the burial service. Had we known that such fooling would arise, the clergymen would have been left at the base where they spent most of their time, and our friends would have been buried with no dividing partition. This exhibition of warring creeds at such a time and place was profoundly disgusting to all who witnessed it.

“For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,
His can’t be wrong, whose life is in the right.”
(Pope)

There was something extraordinary about our next relief, for it was effected by the King’s Own Scottish Borderers of the Lowland Division. This straightened the belief in the buzz which foretold an early trip to the Island of Imbros. We were, therefore, all smiles when the Borderers arrived, and being a Scot, I was chaffed a good deal by my comrades about the Relief of Lucknow, and the like. The appearance and bearing of the Scots pleased me immensely. Physically most of them seemed fit for the Guards. But I confess, after making due allowance for the fact that this was to be their first time in the line, they seemed to me too dour and a trifle unsociable. I inadvertently bumped into one of their Company Sergeant Majors who, after observing my left arm and finding no sign of rank thereon, let me know unmistakably that he was a Sergeant Major. When I saw that the dull fool did not take apologies from lowly rankers I let him know what the Scots in the Naval Division thought of Army Sergeant Majors; but what he got from some of the Yorkshire miners almost made his moustache stand on end and he was glad to pass on.

The Imbros illusion was shattered on passing the Support Trench where we found our Second Brigade mustering. “Why are you not going into the line” we shouted ? “Hell knows” was the reply. On reaching our rest camp we were not allowed to wander, There were frequent roll calls and no bathing parades. At night we were forbidden to remove any part of our uniform or equipment; but, as the kidneys are delicate organs, we were forced to disobey orders to the extent of removing our entrenching tool blades. The word got round that the Scots were going to attack. During the relief to which I have just referred some men of the Lowland Division were curious to know all about the magic “wee hill” called Achi Baba, and it was alleged that they made light of the serious tales they were told and bragged that they could take the “wee hill” with sticks. This story went the rounds and was generally believed. I did my best to discount it, for I could see that our men would not stand for patter of this kind; but my efforts were unavailing. “The Scots have said it and we shall see how they get on” was the piqued reply I received to my entreaties.

52nd Lowland Division’s attack (The Battle of Achi Baba Nullah.) 12th/13th July 1915.

The day arrived and a more intensive bombardment than that of the 4th June was laid down by our guns. The fire lifted, and in a short time reports on the fighting filtered through. “The Scots have taken two trenches, - three trenches - and are still advancing.” On receipt of this news there was no containing the men of the Second Naval Brigade: and when we heard that our First Brigade had gone over the heads of the Lowland Division, cheer on cheer was raised and the desire to get into it grew stronger as the battle raged. When the engagement was at its height we moved off in time to escape raking Turkish artillery fire. Moving quickly forward we passed through the Nullah of Death and enjoyed excellent



Above:- R.N.D. Salvage on "W" Beach after the Third Battle of Krithia. 4/6/15. Imperial War Museum Ref Q 14998. Below :- Inspection of Howe Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel Collins) of the 2nd Naval Brigade, by General Sir Ian Hamilton, G.C.B., at Kephalos Camp, Imbros, 18th June 1915. Imperial War Museum. Ref Q 13297.

Some battalions were given leave others were not, after trouble with Hood Battalion. See 'The Hood Battalion' ISBN 0 85053 386 9. Pages 107/108 for details.

cover until we reached our original Fire Trench which, to our amazement, was held by men of the Lowland Division looking sorely beset. In anticipation of a Turkish barrage being laid down we advanced by platoons in worm formation, and soon reached the original Turkish Front Line into which we dropped. The trench was full of Turkish dead lying in every possible position. We had to thread our way through them to the nearest communication trench where we were obliged to walk over the mangled remains of more Turks before reaching their old Reserve Trench which now served as our Front Line. This trench had been so badly battered by our artillery that the converted parapets formed a parapet not more than four feet high.

Our first concern was to deepen the trench and build up the parapet. Picks and shovels were hurried forward for the purpose, but we had to call a halt on finding the floor of the trench lined with dead Turks. As there was no sign of an immediate counter-attack we turned our attention to clearing the trench of the wounded, leaving the dead until time could be found to dispose of them. The evening closed on a harrowing scene. To find a resting place clear of the dead we had to burrow under the parapet and there we lay in fitful slumber when our hour of watch expired, to waken and carry on again till dawn. During the watches, agonising cries of "water, water," could be heard distinctly, and at dawn we could see what appeared to be pieces of clothing being waved, as voices growing fainter and fainter pleaded to be rescued at nightfall. A lad named Newton effected a very brave rescue, but was sniped and killed from behind soon afterwards. Another attempt by a boy Walker ended in his making the supreme sacrifice also, and all further attempts were forbidden.

Our water bottles were now empty, and thirst increased with the increasing heat of the day; yet we had to carry on without water until the following day, when the Battalion Chief Petty Officer arrived with a large skin bag which looked for all the world like a diseased bagpipe minus the chanter. For a measure he carried a Wills tobacco tin, which normally contained two ounces of tobacco, and from this tin each man received two rations of water. Unfortunately it was found impossible to get forward to an isolated company of the Drakes, who set to dig for the precious liquid; but as soon as they reached moist earth they stuffed their mouths with it in order to relieve their torment.

If the division would hold on for twenty-four hours the first contingent of Kitchener's army would relieve them, so the promise ran. Twenty-four hours passed, but no relief came. By a stroke of good fortune communication with the rear had been secured, and a man from each section was despatched for water to Romanos Well. I was chosen for this duty and on my way down I was held up at a trench junction by a jovial company gathered round a Turk who had been killed instantaneously by the detonation of a high explosive shell. He was sitting on the Fire step in a normal position, with his eyes and mouth open, and some rogue had discovered that by punching his abdomen his tongue would protrude and slowly withdraw to the mouth again. They were all impatiently waiting their turn, but as I could see no fun in such an indulgence, I hurried on. When I arrived at the well I had to fight for water, so large and disorderly was the crowd which had assembled from all units, and on returning to the line I was received with open arms.

For three days more we carried on in utter misery, and finally the Notts and Derbys arrived. We must have presented a sorry spectacle for, in addition to being covered with dust from head to foot, we had enjoyed only one decent wash in three weeks, and had been without a shave for the best part of a month. The men from the Midlands were ever so kind to us. Although we were dying for a smoke we had to refuse their liberal offers of cigarettes in case they would leave themselves short of the only known protection against flies, and the sure prop for dropping spirits. It was with regret that we parted with the good-hearted fellows, for it was as clear to us as noon-day that they too had been brought to the jaws of death without sufficient preparation. When we moved from the trench system all attempts to do so in orderly fashion failed. Blocks occurred at regular intervals imposing a heavy tax on our patience. During one of our enforced halts I found myself gazing at legs and arms and the crown of a head sticking out of the earth at the top of a communication trench. The sun had burned away all the hair from the head and had left a plain shiny surface on which the letters "R.I.P." had been printed in indelible ink. This could have been done only by means of a copying-ink pencil, and in view of the shortage of water and the size of the letters, the saint or jester who inscribed them must have moistened his pencil with his own saliva. As I contemplated the spectacle and mused on calling to mind that the head may have been that of a Mussulman who despised all things Christian.

When free from obstructions our withdrawal became more orderly until passing close to Romanos Well when, despite every effort on the part of the officers, the ranks broke and all rushed for water. Each swallowed enough for a camel, and full to the brim we marched off in small detachments to our shelled retreat at Helles. To save his face, a hefty Petty Officer named Greene got three of us together, and staggering on well away from the beaten track we came to another well where men of the Field Artillery were drawing water. At our approach the artillerymen withdrew, and formed an avenue through which we passed. They removed our equipment and implored us to sit down while we had another fill up, but we were afraid to squat from fear of our limbs stiffening. Addressing Greene, one of them asked; "Are these all that are left of your platoon?" Without turning a hair he replied: "Yes, we went up fifty-four strong and these are all I have left." It took me hard to keep my face straight for not one of us belonged to Green's platoon and he hadn't the foggiest notion where his men were.

When all that remained of the battalion reached Helles, a number of the lads were overcome by fatigue while many looked as if they had lost all hope in the world. Already we had had two suicides and to stay the mania our Battalion Commander ordered rum to be issued in large quantities. Inspired by the drug someone began to sing "To be a farmer's Boy." In no time all were singing like linties. The transformation was so swift and the antics so grotesque that I could not keep from smiling when tears would fain have come. As the rum lost its potency, sleep kindly intervened. Some lay face downwards with only their packs removed and few took the trouble to bother about their entrenching tool blades. In my sleep I dreamed dreams so sweet and entrancing as to cause me to regret my return to consciousness. During the dream periods I conversed with friends far away.

The intervening distance seemed to be meaningless by some supernatural power, as old friends trooped past and talked to me in a more elevating and stimulating way than they were capable of doing in the flesh. So real did the experience seem that on waking in the morning to the sound of guns, for some moments I was in doubt as to whether I had really parted from them for the night or had entered the realm of troubled slumber to dream of battlefields and roaring cannons.

Few of us heard "Hey Johnnie Cope" that morning; for of those left standing almost all were sick men and many had to be assisted to the medical dug-out. The continuous fighting from the Landing had so reduced their vitality that they became an easy prey to almost every mentionable disease, the worst of all being "black" dysentery. Some of the sufferers from this malady lay round the latrine day and night clothed only in blankets, and a number of them died where they lay. I had not seen Eric Anderson for some time and I was beginning to wonder if he was still in the land of the living when I observed him approaching. At first I scarcely knew the boy, for he seemed inches taller and appeared to be dying on his feet. He had reported sick but, after receiving a good dose of castor oil, was instructed to carry on. The boy looked so ill that I insisted on his pestering the doctor when he was evacuated and sent to England. Young Popham on the other hand, who was about two years older than Eric, had firmed up beautifully into one of the best men in the battalion.

Since joining the Drakes, Fry, being a Petty Officer, had been too busy to see me, but as our troubles began to cancel themselves out I enjoyed more of his company. One afternoon I arrived just in time to join his bathing parade, and on returning to camp we sat apart and discussed the last fight. It was the bloodiest encounter we had experienced so far, and he was not slow to praise the Scots for putting up such a fine show. He maintained however, that but for the timely intervention of our Division the counter-attack would have resulted in the almost total extinction of what remained of the Lowland Division, and in this I concurred. Personally, I was delighted with the Scots fine effort, for in common with my countrymen in the Naval Division I had a high standard to live up to, and some silly prejudice to live down, even on the field. In the course of our conversation we passed from the actual fighting to the aftermath, I told Fry how keenly affected I was on running through a group of K.O.S.B. dead, to see them clustered round their officer who had fallen forward on his hands and knees and had died in that position. He told me that when his men had settled down he walked among the dead lying behind our lines and was surprised to observe how pleasant some of them looked in death, "I wish I could paint, Mac," he said, wistfully. "Why?" I asked. "Because" he continued, "I saw two youngsters sitting near to each other and both had died while in the act of removing their puttees as if they were preparing to go to bed. I should like to put that on canvas for everybody to see."

On moving about I heard of many gallant acts which the bestowers of awards, being always too far behind, never came to know of; but of all the tales, the manner in which Sub Lieutenant Startin (5) passed away, made the greatest impression on me. It transpired that he had been brought into the trench badly wounded. The call for a stretcher for "Mr Startin" was passed along the line. He heard the call and enquired if he was the only wounded person to be evacuated. On being told that there was a line of wounded ahead he insisted on taking his turn and died before reaching the Dressing Station.

A diversion of a rather serious kind was provided by Ginger Morton. The red wine of the Senegalese was now much too feeble after double doses of rum, and, in the manner peculiar to spirit drinkers, he discovered that a Greek working party, billeted in the vicinity of "V" beach, possessed a liberal supply of a potent cognac. Off he went on his own loaded with stolen jam. He was missing for a week and might have been allowed to stray unmolested, like the little white donkey which wandered about from battalion to battalion, had he kept sober; but one day Ginger got mortally fou' and when brought back to the Drakes under arrest he was hardly capable of biting his little finger. A Court-martial followed, and fortunately for him the Court was composed of Naval Officers. In the treatment of crime on the field our officers always proved to be wise far and beyond the army practice and, recognising that Ginger was too good a soldier to shoot, he was given the light sentence of thirty days "crucifixion." During the day he was kept hard at work and at dusk was bound hand and foot and laid in a hole. Here I visited him regularly bringing always a choise collection of good things from the lads which he managed to spirit away and consume at leisure.

Our rest was doing us good. Reinforcements were arriving but we were shocked to find that a large proportion of them were "War Babies." The little chicks looked game, yet how could they be expected to stand up to climatic conditions which deprived even our horses of their vitality and rendered them useless for any serious work? We had brought a good proportion of youngsters with us, and happily the blend was good, but to carry more than a fair quota of adolescents was courting disaster. With this serious possibility on our minds we worked with a will to bring our new charges to a full realisation of what they might have to face, taking care to temper the truth with words of cheer. (6)

To be continued.

Notes & References :-

- (1) The letters of Major General Sir Archibald Paris. The Department of Documents, Imperial War Museum.
- (2) **Lieutenant Green**, who died on the 20/9/1915, see page 259 for details.
- (3) **Sub Lieutenant Iliff**, who died 20/6.1915, see page 386 for details.
However in the Admiralty Library at Great Scotland Yard, London, in the book R.N.D. 'Record of Officer's Service' ROS 182. Vol 1, page 280, appears the following details:-

Alan Chadwick Iliff. Born 1885 and therefore aged 30 years on the date of his Commission. He had been promoted from the ranks and was formally London Z/245. R.N.V.R.

Next of Kin :- His brother C.W. Iliff of Keasden, Feldon, Boxmoor, Herts.

He obtained his Commission at the Crystal Palace on the 10th March 1915. On the 30th March 1915 he became an officer of the Benbow Battalion. He sailed with them to Gallipoli as part of the M.E.F. However on the 12th June 1915 he was transferred to the Nelson Battalion. On the 20th June 1915 he received a bullet wound to his head and died the same day.

- (4) **Lieutenant McGrath**, who died 24/6/1915, see page 443 for details.
In the Admiralty Library at Great Scotland Yard, London, in the book R.N.D. 'Record of Officer's Service' ROS 182. Vol 2, page 50, appears the following details:-

Percival Wainman McGrath. Next of Kin his mother, Mrs A. G. McGrath of 4, Christchurch Road, Folkstone, Kent. He was Commissioned on 24th September 1914 at Crystal Palace. He saw service at Antwerp. On the 8th January 1915 he joined the Drake Battalion, being promoted, at Gallipoli, to a Lieutenant on the 3rd June 1915. However, he was wounded on 21st June 1915 and died from these wounds on the 24th June. He was buried at Lancashire Landing by Rev Beardmore the following day. He was to be mentioned in Despatches - London Gazette on 5/11/15. Also mentioned in Despatch of G.O.C. in C.M.E.J. 22/09/15. London Gazette 5/11/15.

- (5) **Sub Lieutenant Startin**, who died 19/7/15, see page 482 for details.
In the Admiralty Library at Great Scotland Yard, London, in the book R.N.D. 'Record of Officer's Service' ROS 182. Vol 1, page 143, appears the following details:-

Francis Henry James Startin. Next of Kin his Father Capt J Startin C.B., R.N.R.

Wyndlawn, Hayling Island. He was Commissioned at Crystal Palace on 26th October 1914, by the 1st March 1915 he was an officer with the Nelson Battalion. He sailed with the M.E.F. on the 1st March 1915. Becoming the Adjutant & Quartermaster at the Base HQ on 11th April 1915. At Gallipoli he was wounded on 13th July 1915 with a perforated wound in his abdomen. He died of these wounds on 19th July and was buried ashore at 'W' Beach., Cape Helles. Mentioned in Despatch of G.O.C. in C. (M.E.J.) of 11th December 1915. London Gazette 28/01/16.

- (6) This account is from 'The War To End War.' 1914 - 1918 by Thomas Macmillan. Dated 11th November 1935. Glasgow. Housed in the Department of Documents, Imperial War Museum, London.

I would like to thank Thomas Macmillan's son Ian Macmillan for permission to publish this work.

The Backhouse Post.

At the entrance to the Backhouse Post was a sign, fashioned from a biscuit tin, on which was roughly painted in black letters the words "Backhouse Post". It marked the position familiar to every R.N.D. officer and man and many others, on the peninsula. It was placed at the site chosen soon after the landings of the 25th April 1915 for the Brigade Headquarters of Commodore Oliver Backhouse commanding the 2nd Naval Brigade. The Naval Division was established in the right hand sector on the left of the French Corps. When the front advanced after the early May assaults and the Brigade Headquarters moved forward, the "Post" was adopted for the Divisional Supply Dump, being the limiting point for wheeled transport. Although not free from enemy observation and shell fire, it had the advantages of some trees for shade and a nullah or stream.

When the Naval Division was succeeded in the Sector by the 52nd (Lowland) Division, "Backhouse Post" was retained for its own supply dump and it continued as such until the evacuation. It was therefore a famous Gallipoli landmark, often referred to in Orders and told of in histories. This relic, was brought off by the late Major Bruce Allen, 7th Royal Scots. (1)

It now is an exhibit in the Regimental Museum & Headquarters of The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment) in Edinburgh Castle. It is housed in a substantial wooden frame, with glass sides. The tin is roughly triangular, having presumably been knocked into this shape for sign purposes and is ten and half inches by ten and half inches. The words "Backhouse Post" appear on all three sides of the tin. (2)

When I visited Gallipoli in 1992 and again in 1998 to study the R.N.D. area of fighting I could find no trace of the Backhouse Post. The Achi Baba Nullah still flows by and the general area is easy to find, but the plough and time have gained the upper hand. When one looks at the photograph of the Post, at the bottom right is what could have been the triangular sign. From accounts studied and maps produced at the time the stream is situated just behind the bush line.

Len Sellers.

References.:-

- 1) Printed sheet numbered 8. Edinburgh Castle. Regimental Museum & Headquarters of The Royal Scots (The Royal Regiment.)
- 2) Letter to L.G. Sellers from Lieutenant Colonel J.L. Wilson Smith, O.B.E. Regimental HQ The Royal Scots. Ref RHQ/RS/166. Of 17th October 1990.

Western Front.

SURGEON LIEUTENANT A.L.P. GOULD,

**R.N. , attached 2/R.M.L.I. 63rd (Naval)
Division, V Corps, Third Army.**

In issue number 8 of the R.N.D. (March 1999) Kyle Tallett 's article was published headed - Backs To The Wall - The Royal Marines - March 1918. - During this account he quoted the words of Surgeon Pearce-Gould. I am now pleased to record that I am now in a position to publish, this interesting description of the German advance and Royal Naval Division's retreat, to the old 1916 battlefields, in full. I suggest that you read this item together with the maps on pages 654/655 for reference.

In Front Line, Fesquieres ? Thursday March 21st 1918.

Woke at 10 minutes to 5 a.m. by the noise of a terrific bombardment. The Commanding Officer woke at the same time, and at once rushed to the mouth of the dug-out, remarking to me "This is the beginning of the real thing." Two minutes later he ran back shouting "gas", and as the alarm was given we detected phosgene already streaming through the dugout. All gas masks on promptly - Commanding Officer and Adjutant then went up to explore but all was black fog with gas shells bursting all round and gas pervading everything. The next four hours were sheer misery - we sat like caged rats with fear upon us all and a sense of hideous impotence. Fires were lit and fans blown and about 9 a.m. we found atmosphere sufficiently clear to leave off masks below, but above all was still thick. All this time no news was available. About 11 a.m. the sun burst through the morning mist, and the gas slowly cleared out of the ravine. Never was sunshine more welcome ! Gas bombardment had now stopped some two hours, but high explosives were falling behind us near the batteries, and barrage could still be heard in front. We got news from the Brigade of an attack on Premy Salient with a slight loss of trench on our front and of further dent to left of Flesquieres on 17th Division front.

About noon I got an urgent call to attend wounded at a battery behind us, and went off with Wormald. Found a horrible shambles, about 8 men in deep dugout with but the scantiest first aid since 8 a.m. I did what I could for them - amputated a hanging arm with jack knife, doped with morphia all round and got all away to Power at Havrincourt.



**These photographs are from the Royal Marines Museum, Southsea, Hants.
 Above:- Examining the dead British and German. Reference - 7/17/1 (23)
 Below :- Prepared for a gas attack. Reference - 7/17/1 (16)**



Returned about 1.30. The rest of the day was quiet with us. We had a few minor wounded only. Evening situation reported to be (1) Dent to left of Flesquieres, (2) Dent in front of Ribecourt, (3) Dent in La Vacquerie Sector, re-gained, (4) Voluntary retirement to take place at nightfall from Flesquieres and Ribecourt to H. defences, leaving us occupying front line in Bilhem Chapel Switch and Intermediate Brown Line. This made our headquarters unsuitable and late at night Spraggett and I were sent to look for new Headquarters and Regimental Aid Post. My search unsuccessful, but Spraggett thinking he had found a place, Headquarters and Company were led off at 4.30 a.m., wandered for over an hour in pitch darkness and failed altogether to identify the spot and as a result finally returned at 5.45 jaded and dejected, and thoroughly unprepared by any rest for the next day's attack. Altogether a black ending to a black day. Commanding Officer appears distinctly unnerved.

Friday, March 22nd 1918.

Barrage started early in the left distance. After this fitful sleep, I got up about 7, and had tea and toast with Wrangham. A new search was to be made for Headquarters, but before this was done an alarm was given at 8.30 that the Hun was coming over on the "left". The Commanding Officer promptly summoned Headquarters Company and started leading them over via Brown Line to the left where he thought the attack was coming. Morning misty and visibility was poor. After crossing Bapaume-Havrincourt Road and getting into Brown Line again we came into heavy shell fire; passed poor Collier and Wittey killed, and on through a devilish fire to find Williams. I got separated a little from the Commanding Officer but heard his whereabouts and ran into a Cabouche to find him. With a shock I came upon him there lying badly hit, pale, collapsed, and in great pain. His left arm was badly smashed close to shoulder - a second wound in buttocks. Dressing it was very difficult, but we did what we could and after a painful half hour I got him fixed up on a stretcher ready for carrying to Havrincourt Village. Then I had Wrangham to see to with a broken right arm and leg - he was a brick. Together we formed a slow party along a narrow trench onto the Flesquieres Road and to the village - a very painful half hour, shells rather thick and both men were in pain. However, we arrived without harm at Havrincourt Brewery, where I found Broadhurst. We got them some hot drink and more morphia and packed both off in an ambulance to Trescault.

I decided to make a Regimental Aid Post here and sent back word to Williams, now commanding Battalion, and to men of the medical unit. These joined me about 11 a.m., and we rigged up a fairly satisfactory Regimental Aid Post but acetylene was still burning and water was short. Some wounded drifted in during the morning and also a runner with news that Major Coote of Anson Battalion was coming from Anson to command our Battalion, but I could get no contact with Battalion. The village was shelled continuously and heavily and for 20 minutes about 2 p.m. the Brewery was bombarded furiously. We all sheltered under concreted floor, and no harm was done, not even to cars standing outside ! These ran intermittently all day, through heavy fire. I was rather anxious about my whereabouts as we could get no news of our Battalion or of the battle.

About 5 p.m. we started off for 1st Marine Light Infantry Headquarters to get news. Here I met a runner with a note from Medical Officer to return to the Ravine. I went straight on, sending my own runner back to fetch the Medical Unit. We went a long way round via Brown Trench but arrived safely at about 7.30 p.m. I found Goote, Lee, Egan, Spraggett and White all there - no great events had occurred on our front but owing to trouble elsewhere we had orders to retire in the night to St. Hubert's Cross (in Havrincourt Wood) where eventually we all fetched up and got into billets very tired and hungry - though rations had arrived all night. Here we were to occupy a support line with "Anson" in front and 1st RM to our left. I turned in about 3.30 and slept heavily till dawn.

Saturday, March 23rd 1918.

Woke to a bright, sunny, peaceful morning. I hunted round for a Regimental Aid Post and had just fixed up a good hut when news came that we were all to retire again ! So had a hasty shave and wash, followed by a welcome breakfast, and at 11 a.m. both battalions started off by companies to Bertincourt. It was a strange scene, columns of men all retiring through the wood and across the open country, forming wonderful targets but for some mysterious reason absolutely unmolested ! The battle seemed far enough away from us and our only trouble was the heat of the day.

We passed between Ruyalcourt (now burning) and Hermes, and so to the front of Bertincourt - by irony of fate the very ground where Thomas and I had been shooting partridges a month ago ! Eventually about 2 p.m. we got settled into our bit of the "Green Line", two companies just below the railway embankment in front of Bertincourt, two in reserve behind the bank; Headquarters took a large drain pipe running through the Bank and I got an excellent hut on the rear side, protected from everything but a direct hit. The line was well dug and excellently wired, and everyone felt confident of holding it. Rations arrived almost as soon as we did and we settled down to a quiet afternoon.

Stragglers from other divisions kept coming through us - chiefly 51st, 17th and 47th Divisions most of the afternoon, but we saw no Huns, and the battle was only close to us on the left where the line took a sharp bend and the Hun were in Velue Wood. We had some casualties from shell fire during the day - Gibbons was killed - and these I could only get away in various opportunist methods, directing them vaguely to Bus and Barastre. I was quite out of touch with Field Ambulance and in spite of repeated notes got no bearers from them and no reply. All was quiet on our front till evening, after a gloomy meal in Headquarters drain pipe ugly rumours began to arrive about the Boche breaking into Bus on our right. As a result the Commandant therefore threw out C Company to act the "Hood" as defensive flank and himself withdraw to Bertincourt about 4 a.m. I remained in my hut with the Medical Unit and got what sleep I could, wondering much what the morrow would bring and how long our withdrawal would have to go on without a fight.

Sunday March 24th. Dies Nefasta !

Had very little sleep, as was disturbed by wounded passing through and by worrying rumours. Had to keep one poor fellow with a gunshot wound of the spine and paraplegia in the hut. Turned out at 7 a.m. but could glean little news from Company Headquarters (now in a drain pipe). All was quiet round us and I had just finished a welcome cup of tea with Profitt when without a word of warning "S.O.S." went up from front line at 7.55 a.m. B. Company (in reserve) dashed up to the top of embankment and fire started, while I hurried back to my Regimental Aid Post. In less than a minute there were cries of "cease fire" - "Boche is coming in with his hands up". This seemed incredible and a minute later Perry passed me shouting "Boche is in our front line - 2 Companies have surrendered, run for your life". We dived for our packs and gear and I leading the way, we ran like rabbits across the field and village. I arrived breathless and hot, with Perry and others close behind. No machine guns had started yet, but suddenly a hellish barrage came down on Bertincourt Village. The others not appearing and it being apparently a case of saue qui peut. I dropped my pack and took to my heels straight through the village and out the other side, heading for Barastre. By amazing luck I got through safe, and reached opposite slope. Pulling up here, I could see no one behind me and could only believe them fallen in the barrage. I decided to carry on till past the support line and then try to find the remnants of the Battalion. So I went on now quite alone, over hill and valley, to edge of Barastre.

Just behind this I found 17th Division occupying a line, and met a Brigadier who told me 63rd Division was retiring on Villers au Flos and probably Beaulencourt. Bus, Bertincourt and probably Rocquigny had fallen. I passed on to a sugar factory between Le Transloi and Beaulencourt. Here to my joy I found the Staff Captain and odd remnants of the Battalion and Brigade and heard that Brigade would be reformed there. I was frightfully hot, thirsty and not a little weary after the morning, which had been disturbing enough. Battle still appeared to be well on both flanks, and rumours came of Boche holding Lechelle, Sailly Saillisel and Haplincourt ! Apparently for the moment we were in full retreat, and all seemed black enough. I got some food with the Staff Captain and in early afternoon, to my joy, substantial remnants of 1st & 2nd R.M.L.I. Battalions came in. Goote, Lee, Egan, Spraggett, White, all my Medical Unit, except Worinald and my servant Stamp, about 120 all told ! We were as surprised as pleased to see each other. Their story was very similar to mine - a sudden late order to withdraw, a retreat, then a ghastly barrage, and a gathering up of remnants at Villers au Flos, followed by an orderly march to the Sugar Factory. It seemed that large parts of A & B companies must have been caught by Boche breaking in on our right and working down the trench before any warning could reach us, but substantial remnants of other companies had got through. Poor Broadhurst and all his medical unit were missing. Clutterbuck and West were safe with about 120 of 1st RM.

We all spent an hour resting on the grass waiting for news and orders. We heard that tanks had gone in from Haplincourt and had temporarily pushed Hun back from Bus and Ytres, but the situation was still very ugly and we were nearly surrounded ! About 5 p.m. we reformed as a slender remnant of the 188th Brigade and started retiring across the Somme battlefield for Martinpuich, "Ansons" in front, ourselves as rearguard. We had a long and weary, but fortunately unmolested march through the gathering dusk, passed 17th Division holding a temporary line near Gueudscourt and fetched up about 9.30 p.m. at Martinpuich. Here we found some huts left by Chinese Labour Corps, and Brigade took up its position. By some marvellous means our rations were there, and we all fell in with a will, getting fires and food. Then late at night the Battalion turned out to hold a guarding line. I stayed in the huts with Headquarters officers of the Worcesters, the Colonel, Ladd, Dunlop, Medical Officer of Worcesters, etc., and endeavoured to sleep, but with very little success.

Monday March 25th 1918.

Had an early breakfast with the Worcesters; spent the morning in Martinpuich with 1st Royal Marine Light Infantry and Worcesters. Our Battalion holding the line about one mile out in support of the Anson. For two or three hours things went well and on our own front Boche made no advance. Some dozen wounded or so came through and we directed them on to Pozieres. There was no news still from the Field Ambulance. About midday the Brigade withdrew to Courcellette and we followed them.

From this time onwards all the battle was absolute confusion. Our left and right were wildly in the air and no one knew anything. General Lowrie, G.O.C. the Division was in Courcellette up to a dangerous hour, when everyone started slowly withdrawing on Thiepval. Dunlop and I kept together in front of them, believing that all must be cut off and being able to do nothing. We slowly backed across the hideous old battle field till we reached the Thiepval Ridge. Here was a terrible scene as long lines of straggling and demoralised troops were streaming in. Fortunately the Brigadier of 189th Brigade was on the ridge (Commander W.M. Egerton who had become acting commanding officer on the 19th March.) and he held everyone up and slowly reorganised the Division. Our own Battalion turned up about 6 p.m., all still safe and in good order, and good moral. Boche were still some way off. The defence of Thiepval Ridge was organised as follows, 188th Brigade holding the ridge, allowing 189th and 190th Brigades to retire across the river Ancre. Rations mysteriously arrived in galloping limbers together with ammunition after dusk. For a time there was free interchange of machine-gun fire and we had several casualties, both sides were absolutely lacking guns, and there was no shelling. We settled down to a strange night - weather very cold, men all "done" and a hopeless feeling of isolation and despair on all of us. I joined up with O'Neill (Medical officer of Bedfords) and Dunlop, and together we made a very comfortable Regimental Aid Post in two huts close to a bridge over towards the Ancre behind Thiepval Ridge. Col. Kirkpatrick of the Ansons came through badly hit in the abdomen. We made a good fire and cooked tea, etc., and did our best to sleep for an hour or two.

Tuesday March 26th 1918.

Had only one or two wounded through during the night. Slept fitfully, woke about 3 a.m. to hear movement outside, and on going out found the Brigade Staff (189th) preparing to move. I found the Brigadier who told us Thiepval was to be evacuated at 4.30 a.m., and a new line to be taken up across the river, roughly Aveluy-Hamel. We three Medical Officers therefore left with our men about 3.45 a.m. and crossed the bridge and made our way to Mesnil Village, where we temporarily installed ourselves in a cellar just being vacated by Royal Field Artillery. A fire and some tea helped to keep the cold out and we slumbered till daylight.

In the morning I set off with Meadowcroft to find our Battalion, and we were lucky in meeting them close at hand, when just taking up their designated positions in the reserve line which was just east of Mesnil Village. This consisted of a sunken road near a railway, with one or two inferior dug-outs near, one of which we took for Headquarters. I then returned to find a Regimental Aid Post, which I fixed up much to my satisfaction in the railway station. This was a two-storey cottage sandbagged on the top floor, and with a fair cellar. Having settled here, I went along to Headquarters for breakfast, fried ham and toast eaten with the fingers !

During the morning units of the 12th Division came marching in, telling they had been hurried down from Armentieres and evidently coming to reinforce our line. One of the battalions settled in the road near us, and about tea time news came that they were to relieve us, and we were to go to Englebelmer. The day passed quietly, there was some shelling near us, and one alarm of an attack on our left, which came to nothing. The Medical Officer of the Buffs joined us in Regimental Aid Post, and took over and the Staff Captain looked in for a meal.

The village had been shelled rather heavily at times, but we got no wounded from our own people. Soon after 6 p.m. the Medical Unit, now consisting of myself with Hargreaves and Meadowcroft set off in advance of our Battalion and walked to Englebelmer. We arrived there to find more "wind" about Hun being in Mailly, which proved quite untrue ! We had just settled into fairly comfortable billets and were looking forward, as were the Battalion, to a night's sleep, when an amazing counter-order came for us to go back to Martinsart ! Fortunately cookers and rations had arrived, so all troops got a hot meal at 11 p.m. and foot-sore, jaded and bitterly disappointed, the Battalion resumed the road and wearily marched to Martinsart. We arrived at midnight and billeted in the square, where two terrible things happened.

The First was an agitated platoon commander came running in with a story that the Boche had broken through into Aveluy Wood, and was close to the village "in force" - his own company surrounded. But second a few minutes later a high explosive and high velocity shell burst right in the middle of one of our companies. A horrible scene followed, shrieks

and groans, men scattering etc. There was a perfect shambles, but everybody turned out with a will to clear, providentially there was an Advanced Dressing Station of the 37th Brigade right at hand. And we got all the cases dressed and away in 45 minutes ! Casualties from this one shell were 5 killed and 18 wounded, including poor "Old Gentleman" among the latter, but fortunately not bad.

While this was doing, a frantic buzz was going on at the joint 37th and 188th Brigades. Our function appeared plain, i.e. we had been dragged back to reinforce the morally weak and futile 12th Division. We turned into our billets frightfully tired, for a short time, but in vain, as within an hour the Battalion was ordered out and with our Commandant in command, a joint mob of 20 royal Marine Light Infantry and Ansons dashed off, literally shouting with joy to drive back the Hun ! The story of what actually happened is difficult to determine, but all the Huns that had got a footing were driven headlong back right through Mesnil and across to the other side of the railway. The line was re-established, and the wood was cleared by 4 a.m. This little achievement was due entirely to the jaded ranks of the 2nd Royal Marine Light Infantry and the Ansons. Under the circumstances it was little short of miraculous. It had the instant effect of giving a great "buck-up" to the moral of the Battalion. We took 5 machine guns and 12 prisoners, mostly wounded. We had a string of wounded up to about 5.30, but I felt so utterly exhausted that I turned in about 4.30 and left Hargreaves to carry on. Finally all was quiet, and we slept till morning.

Wednesday March 27th 1918.

The morning broke calmly after the feverish night. We had some welcome breakfast in our billets, a large cellar under a farm, lined with potatoes and straw. We dozed among the former, Lee of course, being totally inert with sleep. There was some shelling of the village, one or two coming unpleasantly close, and the men were moved out of the barn into the fields, but we had no casualties. The day slowly slipped on, and we all slumbered at intervals till tea time, when orders came for the Battalion to move out and hold a reserve line behind Mesnil, to prevent a repetition of last night's trouble. I was left with the Medical Unit and Headquarters servants. During the evening we had stray casualties coming past from the 12th Division who talked of their men "Falling back" and were all in a state of miserable moral, but evidently no attack was on, though to our right some brisk machine gun fire was audible in the evening, and we heard that the Boche was trying to push forward towards Bouzincourt.

Power turned up in the evening bringing Morris, a new Medical Officer (U.S.A.) for 1st RM and he stayed with me. Power told me the location of his Advanced Dressing Station on the Englebelmer Road, and left two squads and runners, so we felt in touch with Field Ambulance. He returned later with news that we were to be relieved by 2nd Division and about 10 p.m. the Medical Officer of the 24th Royal Field Artillery appeared with his men. They had had 24 hours rest at Englebelmer and were returning to take our place. We all spent a long and weary night together by the fire, keeping ourselves going with tea at intervals, and all were dead tired. At last about 4 a.m. the definite order of

relief came through and about 4.30 a.m. Goote and Lee appeared. Never did a relief seem slower, but at last we got away in dribbets. Morris I started off with Headquarters servants, and we wearily dragged our way along to Englebelmer, and so to Mailly-Maillet, where we arrived completely done, just as dawn was breaking. However, there we found our own principal medical officer with billets ready, and it seemed as though as last we were really to get some rest. I turned in at once, between two large mattresses, and dropped into a heavy sleep.

Thursday March 28th 1918.

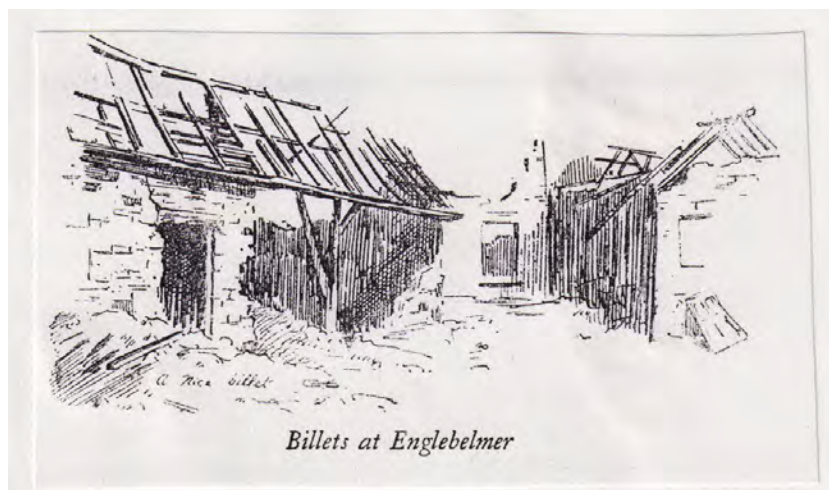
Slept till 11 a.m., turned out for breakfast then lunch and back again to bed. Woke at about 4.30 p.m. to hear we were to move back to Forceville, and at 5 p.m. we started, in better spirits than we had been for many a day, and already better for a day's sleep. The march was not long, and we all got in by companies before 7 p.m., to find good billets in an estaminet for ourselves, barns and houses for the men. Other units of the 2nd Division were vacating them for Englebelmer, not a shell to be heard. We all turned in as soon as we had had some dinner, and slept the sleep of the just. Our first undisturbed night for 8 days ! Weather broke today, and it was raining hard at intervals during the evening, but we little cared for such minor afflictions as this, and felt utterly happy and content.

Surgeon Lieutenant A.L.P. Gould, R.N. 2nd RM.

Reference :- Public Record Office, Kew. WO95/ 3110.

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Note:- Surgeon Gould died of wounds on 19th May 1918. See page 445 for details.



Billets at Englebelmer

On this and next page drawings from 'On Four Fronts With The Royal Naval Division.' Published 1918.

WESTERN FRONT.
BEAUCOURT REVISITED.

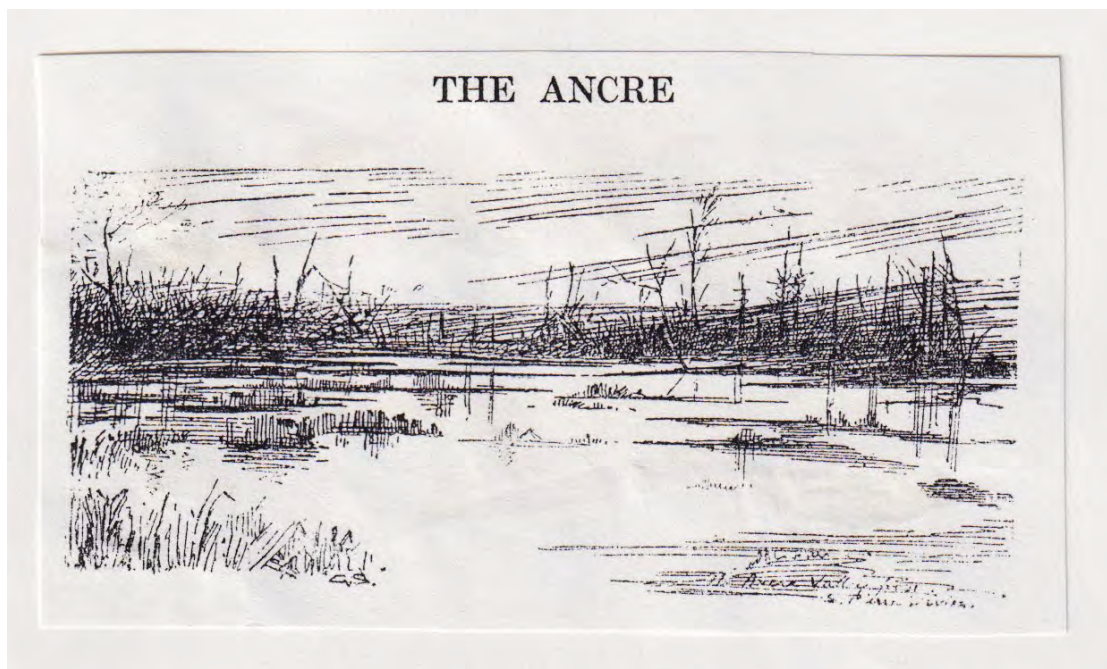
By

Lieutenant A.P. Herbert of the Hawke Bn.

This poem highlights the position that The Royal Naval Division found itself in. The troops were back to the old battlefields of 1916 and by then so many changes had been made in both officers and men, as not many had survived the Battle of The Ancre, of the 13th, 14th & 15th November and the subsequent encounters with the enemy. Even though this poem refers to a period before the German counter attack of March 1918 it clearly shows that Herbert felt deeply the short duration of active service that many experienced, due to death, wounds or illness, and their difference from the old hands.

I would like to thank A.P. Watt Ltd on behalf of Crystal Hale and Jocelyn Herbert for permission to reproduce the poems in this issue of the R.N.D. It was published in 'The Bomber Gipsy' by Methuen & Co. Ltd. in 1919

THE ANCRE



I wandered up to Beaucourt; I took the river
track,
And saw the lines we lived in before the Boche
went back;
But Peace was now in Pottage, the front was
far ahead,
The front had journeyed Eastward, and only
left the dead.

And I thought, How long we lay there, and
watched across the wire,
While the guns roared round the valley, and set
the skies afire !
But now there are homes in Hamel and tents
in the Vale of Hell,
And a camp at Suicide Corner, where half a
regiment fell.

The new troops follow after, and tread the land
we won,
To them 'tis so much hill-side re-wrested from
the Hun;
We only walk with reverence this sullen mile of
mud;
The shell-holes hold our history, and half of
them our blood.

Here, at the head of Peche Street, 'twas death
to show your face;
To me it seemed like magic to linger in the
place;
For me how many spirits hung round the
Kentish Caves,
But the new men see no spirits - they only see
the graves.

I found the half-dug ditches we fashioned for
the fight,
We lost a score of men there - young James was
killed that night;
I saw the star shells staring, I heard the bullets
hail,
But the new troops pass unheeding - they
never heard the tale.

I crossed the blood-red ribbon, that once was
No-Man's Land,
I saw a misty daybreak and a creeping minute-
hand;
And here the lads went over, and there was
Harmsworth shot,
And here was William lying - but the new men
know them not.

And I said, "There is still the river, and still
the stiff, stark trees,
To treasure here our story, but there are only
these";
But under the white wood crosses the dead men
answered low,
"The new men know not BEAUCOURT, but we
are here - we know."

A.P. Herbert.

* * * * *

GALLIPOLI.

CASUALTIES OF THE ROYAL NAVAL DIVISION WITH NO KNOWN GRAVES.

Names appear on the Helles Memorial.

From the Database of The Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Adams, Able Seaman. Adam Brown. Tyneside Z/2804. **Howe Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 2/5/1915.
Panel 8 to 15.

Adams. Able Seaman. William, Clyde Z/222. **Howe Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Age 29 years, Son
of William Adams, of 1, Laird St., Port Glasgow. Panel 8 to 15.

Addis, Able Seaman, Percival Richard, London Z/1618. **Hawke Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 25th August 1915.
Panel 8 to 15.

Aitken, Able Seaman, William, Clyde 2/1970. **Nelson Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 13th July 1915. Age 20 years.
Son of John and Annie Shaw Aitken, of 87, Earl's Park Avenue, Newlands, Glasgow. Panel 8 to 15.

Alexander, Able Seaman, James, Clyde Z/2267. **Nelson Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 13th July 1915. Panel 8 to
15.

Allen, Private, John, CH/466(S). **Chatham Bn.** R.M.L.I. Died 29th April 1915. Age 19 years. Son of
Mr. G.H. Allen, of Lynn Cottage, St. Margaret's-at-Cliffe, Dover. Panel 2 to 7.

Allison, Private, George Edwin, CH/18485. **Chatham Bn.** R.M.L.I. Died 12th July 1915. Panel 2 to 7.

Allkins, Lance Corporal, Wilfred Samson, PLY/387(S). **Plymouth Bn.** R.M.L.I. Died 4th March 1915.
Age 24 years. Son of Samson and Marion Rodick Allkins, of "Woodburn," 117, Gravelly Hill,
Birmingham. Panel 2 to 7.

Anderson, Petty Officer, Archibald Walter, Mersey Z/185. **Collingwood Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June
1915. Age 28 years. Son of Agnes Anderson of 16, Albert Road, Tue Brook, Liverpool and the late
Alexander Anderson. Panel 8 to 15.

Anderson, Lieutenant, Charles Coventry, **Anson Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 8th May 1915, Age 27 years.
Son of David Anderson of 8, Westbourne Terrace, Glasgow. B.Sc. (Glasgow University). Led the beach
party at Implacable landing and fell in the first advance up the Achi Baba Nullah. Panel 8 to 15.

Andrew, Able Seaman, William Nesbit, KX/66. **Nelson Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 13th July 1915.
Panel 8 to 15.

Andrews, Captain, C B, **Plymouth Bn.** Royal Marines. Died 11th May 1915. Panel 2 to 7.

Andrews, Able Seaman, Charles William, London Z/282. **Nelson Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 3rd May 1915. Age 31 years. Son of Abraham David and Cecilia Mary Andrews, of 45, Comber Grove, Camberwell, London. Panel 8 to 15.

Andrews, Stoker 1st Class, Joshua John, SS/100617. (RFR/CH/B/5670) **Hood Bn.** Died 4th June 1915. Age 29 years. Son of Joshua and Ellen Andrews, of 7, Ambrose St., Bermondsey, London. Husband of Jennie Andrews. Panel 1 and 2.

Annand, Lieut-Commander, Wallace Moir. **Collingwood Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Ansell, Stoker 1st Class, Alfred, 296903. (RFR/CH/B/3469) **Hood Bn.** Died 6th May 1915. Age 36 years. Son of Benjamin Ansell; husband of Mary Jean Ansell, of 64, Friendly St., St. John's, Deptford, London. Served in the South African War. Panel 1 and 2.

Anslow, Able Seaman, Harold Victor, KP/636. **Anson Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Anthony, Stoker 1st Class, William Thomas, 291205. (RFR/CH/B/7864) **Howe Bn.** Died 4th June 1915. Age 34 years. Son of Thomas and Harriet Anthony; husband of Ada Read (formerly Anthony, nee Cox), of 177, Albany Rd., Camberwell, London. Panel 1 and 2.

Archer, Private, Raymond, PO/12287. **Portsmouth Bn.** R.M.L.I. Died 6th May 1915. Age 34 years. Son of the late John Field Archer and Elizabeth Archer. Panel 2 to 7.

Arnold, Able Seaman. Joshua, Tyneside Z/1357. **Nelson Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 3rd May 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Arnold, Private, Thomas Richard, Ply/693(S). **Plymouth Bn.** R.M.L.I. Died 9th May 1915. Panel 2 to 7.

Arnold, Stoker 1st Class, William, SS/100430. (RFR/CH/B/5526) **Hood Bn.** Died 20th May 1915. Panel 1 and 2.

Ash, Private, John Buckley, Ply/16444. **Plymouth Bn.** R.M.L.I. Died 1st September 1915. Panel 2 to 7.

Asher, Able Seaman, Edwin KW/535. **Drake Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 11th May 1915. Age 22 years. Son of Joseph and Eva Asher, of Newgate, Pontefract. Panel 8 to 15.

Ashman, Sergeant, Charles Edward, PO/15163. **Portsmouth Bn.** R.M.L.I. Died 6th May 1915. Age 28. Son of William and Emily J. Ashman, of 34, The Bayle, Folkstone. Panel 2 to 7.

Askew, Able Seaman, George William, Tyneside Z/1998. **Collingwood Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Age 20 years. Son of Matthew and Mary Askew, of 2, Slateyford, East Tanfield, Co. Durham. Panel 8 to 15.

Atkin, Able Seaman, Jack Gordon, Mersey Z/10. **Howe Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Atkins, Private, Albert Edward Victor, Ply/12 (S). **Plymouth Bn.** R.M.L.I. Died 12th August 1915. Age 18 years. Son of Joseph and Selina Atkins, of 29, Malcolm St., Derby. Panel 2 to 7.

Atkinson, Able Seaman, Jones, KW/416. **Hawke Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 19th June 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Atkinson, Able Seaman, Peter, Tyneside Z/502. **Collingwood Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Age 22 years. Son of Mrs Hannah Atkinson, of 42, Melbourne St., Gateshead-on-Tyne. Panel 8 to 15.

Atkinson, Leading Seaman, Thomas William, SS/107192. (RFR/DEV/B/5014) **Howe Bn.** Died 4th June 1915. Panel 1 and 2.

Audas, Stoker 1st Class, Ernest Septimus, 292404. (RFR/CH/B/5025) **Hood Bn.** Died 19th July 1915. Age 33 years. Husband of Catherine S. Audas, of 121, Lee St., Hull. Panel 1 and 2.

Auld, Able Seaman, George. Clyde Z/30. **Nelson Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 3rd May 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Ayres, Private, Frederick, PO/S/336. **Portsmouth Bn.** R.M.L.I. Died 24th June 1915. Age 19 years. Son of Mr. and Mrs John William Ayres, of Ayresham, Brackley, Northants. Panel 2 to 7.

Badham, Lieutenant, Francis Molyneux, **Collingwood Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Panels 8 to 15 and Additional Panel.

Bagshawe, Sub Lieutenant, Adair Grey, **Collingwood Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Age 30 years. Son of Lucy Bagshawe, of 51, Albert Bridge Road, Battersea, London, and the late Frank T. Bagshawe (Commissioner of Police, Madras, India). Panel 8 to 15.

Bainbridge, Able Seaman, Thomas, Tyneside Z/513. **Collingwood Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Baker, Able Seaman, Ephraim, Tyneside Z/1788. **Collingwood Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Age 25 years. Son of George Baker, of Baker's Cottage, Upper St., Southrepps, Norfolk. Panel 8 to 15.

Balbirnie, Petty Officer, William, Clyde Z/334. **Collingwood Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Age 26 years. Husband of Jane Balbirnie, of 8, Brown St., Dundee. Panel 8 to 15.

Balcombe, Stoker 1st Class, Thomas James, SS/103623. (RFR/CH/B/7955) **Hood Bn.** Died 4th June 1915. Panel 1 and 2.

Bamfield, Quartermaster Sergeant, William John, Ply/6242. (RMR/PLY/1083) **Plymouth Bn.** R.M.L.I. Died 26th May 1915. Age 41 years. Long Service and Good Conduct Medal. Son of William and Elizabeth Bamfield; husband of Alice J. Bamfield, of West End, Wedmore, Cheddar, Somerset. Awarded China Medal (1900). Panel 2 to 7.

Banks, Leading Seaman, Robert, Clyde 2/1722. **Anson Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 6th June 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Barclay, Leading Seaman, William, Clyde 4/1819. **Anson Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 2nd May 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Barker, Leading Seaman. Ernest, Tyneside 6/213. **Collingwood Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Age 20 years. Son of John and Laura Jane Barker, of Wylam House, Wylam Rd., Newcastle-on-Tyne. Enlisted at the outbreak of war. An athlete; bookbinder by trade. Panel 8 to 15.

Barlow, Private, Fred, PO/S/345 (S). **Portsmouth Bn.** R.M.L.I. Died 6th May 1915. Age 15 years. Son of Zipporah Barlow, Of 2, Council Houses, Blidworth, Mansfield, and the late Samuel Barlow. Panel 2 to 7.

Barlow, Able Seaman, William Joseph, Mersey Z/48, **Howe Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 2nd May 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Barnes, Lieutenant, Jack Clixby, **Plymouth Bn.** Royal Marines. Died 11th May 1915. Panel 1 and 2.

Barradell, Stoker 1st Class, Henry Hilburd, CH/SS/107287. (RFR/CH/B/9792) **Howe Bn.** Died 4th June 1915. Panel 1 and 2.

Barratt, Able Seaman, James Thompson, Tyneside Z/675. **Collingwood Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Barrett, Able Seaman, Christopher, KP/747. **Anson Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Barrett, Private, John William, CH/14113, **Deal Bn.** R.M.L.I. Died 26th June 1915. Age 31 years. Son of Walter Barrett. Panel 2 to 7.

Bass, Private, John Thomas, PO/829(S). **Portsmouth Bn.** R.M.L.I. Died 13th July 1915. Age 28 years. Son of Mrs. Jane Bass, of Stamford Bridge, York. Panel 2 to 7.

Bateman, Able Seaman, James Henry, KP/532. **Anson Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Batey, Able Seaman, Isaac, Tyneside Z/751. **Collingwood Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Bath, Able Seaman, Edward Thomas, KP/404. **Drake Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 6th May 1915. Age 43 years. Husband of Susannah Bath, of 20, Whinney Hill, Rotherham. Panel 8 to 15.

Batty, Able Seaman, George Thomas, Mersey 5/152. **Nelson Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 16th June 1915. Age 19 years. Son of Mr. J.G. Batty and Mrs H.J. Batty, of 33, Holt Road., Higher Tranmere, Birkenhead. Panel 8 to 15.

Batty, Able Seaman, George Walter, KP/33. **Anson Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Batty, Able Seaman, Percy Gofton, Tyneside Z/3093. **Nelson Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 13th July 1915. Age 20 years. Son of Henry and Emily Sarah Batty, of 364, Rectory Road., Gateshead-on-Tyne. Panel 8 to 15.

Baxter, Leading Seaman, James, Clyde Z/359. **Collingwood Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Brother of Mr D.K. Baxter, of 3, Waverley Terrace, Dundee. Panel 8 to 15.

Bean, Able Seaman, Alfred Edward, London Z/756. **Hawke Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 21st June 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Beardmore, Private, Arthur, PO/30 (S). **Portsmouth Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 6th May 1915. Age 22 years. Son of John and Winifred Beardmore, of 24, Chapel Row, Normanton, Yorks. Panel 2 to 7.

Beat, Able Seaman, William, KX/312. **Hood Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Age 21 years. Brother of Mr. C. Beat, of 10, Perkins St., Scotswood, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Panel 8 to 15.

Beattie, Stoker 1st Class, William, SS/107737. (RFR/DEV/B/5376) **Hawke Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Panel 1 and 2.

Beckham, Able Seaman, Henry, Tyneside Z/1893. **Collingwood Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Son of Mrs E. Beckham, of 11, Mulberry Terrace, New Kyo, Annfield Plain, Co. Durham. Panel 8 to 15.

Bedford, Able Seaman, Albert, KP/587. **Anson Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 6th May 1915. Age 21 years. Son of Charles and Clara Bedford, of 5, King St., Stockton-on-Tees. Panel 8 to 15.

Bedford, Able Seaman, William Guest, Sussex 1/344. **Howe Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Belcher, Private, Edward, CH/333 (S). **Chatham Bn.** R.M.L.I. Died 5th May 1915. Age 22 years. Son of Mrs. Belcher, of 139, Dalmarnock Rd., Bridgeton, Glasgow. Panel 2 to 7.

Bell, Able Seaman, Charles Robert, Tyneside Z/97. **Howe Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 2nd May 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Bell, Leading Seaman, Harry, KP/834. **Anson Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Bell, Able Seaman, James, Tyneside Z/1551. **Collingwood Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Age 21 years. Son of Robert and Mary Bell, of 6, Granville Avenue, Annfield Plain, Co. Durham. Panel 8 to 15.

Bell, Able Seaman, Joseph, Clyde Z/2236. **Nelson Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 13th July 1915. Son of Joseph Bell, of Terrace, Sandhaven, Fraserburgh, and the late Margaret McPherson Bell. Panel 8 to 15.

Bell, Able Seaman, James Ferguson, Clyde Z/1575. **Nelson Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 13th July 1915. Age 19 years. Son of Peter and Christina Ferguson Bell, of 12, Union St., Clydebank, Glasgow. Panel 8 to 15.

Bell, Private, John James, PO/13038. **Portsmouth Bn.** R.M.L.I. Died 13th July 1915. Age 36 years. Son of Robert and Ann Bell, of Forge House, Highalstow, Rochester; husband of Edith Bell, of 87, Campbell Road., Lower Walmer, Deal. Panel 2 to 7.

Bell, Able Seaman, William Christopher, Tyneside Z/1285. **Hawke Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 6th June 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Bennell, Able Seaman, William James, Tyneside Z/1961. **Collingwood Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Age 23 years. Son of George H. and Isabel Bennell, of 73, Collingwood St., South Shields. Panel 8 to 15.

Bennett, Able Seaman, Henry Ridley, Tyneside Z/835. **Collingwood Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Age 20 years. Son of Thomas and Hannah Bennett, of 16, Jubilee St., Wallsend-on-Tyne. Panel 8 to 15.

Bennett, Sapper, Samuel, Deal/1172 (S). **Div Engineers**, Royal Marine Engineers. Died 5th January 1916. Panel 2 to 7.

Benson, Able Seaman, Jacob, Tyneside Z/2765. **Howe Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Berg, Able Seaman (H.G.) Arthur Hunter, London Z/200. **Nelson Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 13th July 1915. Age 21 years. Son of Jane Elizabeth Berg, of 3, Claremont Gardens, Surbiton, and the late William Berg. Panel 8 to 15.

Berwick, Able Seaman, Robert, Clyde Z/2069. **Collingwood Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Bethell, Able Seaman, Harold, Mersey Z/47. **Howe Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Age 19 years. Son of James Luke Bethell and Mary Ann Bethell, of 25, Brock St., Kirkdale, Liverpool. Panel 8 to 15.

Betts, Private, Herbert Walter, Ply/16416. **Plymouth Bn.** R.M.L.I. Died 13th June 1915. Panel 2 to 7.

Betts, Able Seaman, John Charles, London Z/2452. **Hawke Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 24th December 1915. Age 19 years. Son of Clara Virginia Adams, of 274, Clarence St., Gravesend. Panel 8 to 15.

Bevan, Able Seaman, Philip Henry, Wales Z/520, **Hawke Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 25th December 1915. Age 17 years. Son of the late John Phillip and Arm Bevan. Panel 8 to 15.

Bew, Chief Petty Officer, Vincent John, DEV/167694. **Anson Bn.** Royal Navy. Died 6th May 1915. Age 39 years. Son of the late Charles and Elizabeth Ann Bew. Panel 1 and 2.

Bielby, Private, George Arthur, PO/426 (S). **Portsmouth Bn.** R.M.L.I. Died 13th July 1915. Panel 2 to 7.

Birch, Lance Corporal, Arthur George, PO/4788. (RMR/A/761) **Portsmouth Bn.** R.M.L.I. Died 13th May 1915. Age 46 years. Son of the late George and Miriam Birch; husband of Jessie Emma Birch, of 12, Melville Rd., Upper Mill Lane, Gosport. Panel 2 to 7.

Birch, Petty Officer, Edward, KP/147. **Hawke Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 20th June 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Bird, Able Seaman, Bertram Harold, KP/793. **Anson Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 6th May 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Birnie, Petty Officer, Rome, Clyde Z/2623. **Collingwood Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Black, Second Lieutenant, Cecil John Trower, **Portsmouth Bn.** R.M.L.I. Died 6th May 1915. Age 18 years. Son of William and Sarah Jarvis Black. Panel 2 to 7.

Blackburn, Able Seaman, John Robert, Tyneside Z/2534. **Howe Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Age 21 years. Son of John Blackburn, of 168, New Bridge St., Newcastle-on-Tyne. Panel 8 to 15.

Blagden, Lance Corporal, Henry, PO/6388. **Portsmouth Bn.** R.M.L.I. Died 27th August 1915. Panel 2 to 7.

Blair, Able Seaman, John George, Tyneside Z/2783. **Hood Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 25th May 1915. Panel 8 to 15.

Blance, Able Seaman, William Bruce, KX/269. **Howe Bn.** R.N.V.R. Died 4th June 1915. Age 29 years. Son of Isabella Anderson (formerly Blance), of 11, Tyrrell St., Gateshead-on-Tyne, and the late William Blance. Panel 8 to 15.

Blanchard, Colour Sergeant, Frank, PO/6754. **Portsmouth Bn.** R.M.L.I. Died 6th May 1915. Panel 2 to 7.

R.N.D. PERSONALITY

Cpl. FRANCIS WILLIAM MATTHEWS

ROYAL MARINE LIGHT INFANTRY

PORTSMOUTH BATTALION

REGISTER No. PO. 140(S)

By

His Granddaughter Aileen A. Thompson.

Frank Matthews was born on 15th. November 1877 at Hesley Bar, Thorpe Hesley near Rotherham, South Yorkshire, the eldest child of Benjamin and Ann Mathews. His father was a coal miner who had been born in Coventry and moved to Sheffield with his family at about the age of seven. In Sheffield he met and married Ann Pawson, daughter of an estate worker at Wentworth Woodhouse. Frank was one of seven children, four boys and three girls.

He became a miner like his father, but volunteered to fight in the South African war on 19th January 1900 at the age of 22. He enlisted in the York & Lanc Regiment. His enlistment papers describe him as being 5 feet 6 and a half inches tall, weighing 156 lbs., of a dark complexion with blue eyes and light brown hair, his age is given as 21 yrs., a year less than his real age. Just twenty nine days after enlisting he was sent to South Africa to fight in the Boar War. His medal has 4 clasps which show that he fought at Cape Colony, Orange Free State, Transvaal and Laing's Nek. He was to return to England on 18th May 1901 and was discharged from the army just 7 days later on the 25th May. One week later he found himself the guest of honour at a dinner. The South Yorkshire Times reported the event :-

HONOURING A VOLUNTEER AT THORPE HESLEY

COMPLIMENTARY DINNER AND PRESENTATION

On Wednesday evening, notwithstanding the very unfavourable weather, the old-fashioned village of Thorpe Hesley was en fete. The occasion was a complimentary dinner and presentation of a very handsome gold watch to Lance-Corpl Frank W. Matthews, of the Sheffield Hallamshire Rifles (Volunteers), on his return from the war in South Africa.

Corpl. Mathews is the son of Mr. Ben. Mathews, one of the best-known men in the village who joined the Hallamshires on January 19th, 1900. He went with the half-company from Sheffield to the Transvaal shortly after he volunteered, and returned with his party last week.

When news reached the little village of his safe return, it was decided to give him a suitable welcome, and to put into practical shape the feeling of his neighbours and friends towards him. A committee, with Mr. Walter Casson as treasurer, and Mr. Arthur Wilkinson as Hon. Secretary, set to work, and in a few days a handsome sum of money was collected. With this it was decided to purchase a gold watch, which was done. The dinner took place at the Ball Inn, Hesley Bar, and was admirably served by Mr. and Mrs Tom Parker. Over 60 gentlemen and friends sat down, and did ample justice to the good things provided. On the removal of the cloth, the Rev. R.T.C. Slade, the ever-genial Vicar of Thorpe Hesley, took the chair, having at his side the guest of the evening, Corpl. Matthews. Amongst those present were Mr. B. Matthews, father of the returned volunteer; Mr. W. Casson, treasurer; Mr. A. Wilkinson, Hon. Secretary; Mr. Tom Sylvester, colliery manager; Mr C. Burgan, Mr. Vickers Smith, Managing clerk, Thornccliffe Collieries; Mr George Sanderson, Mr. John Wheatley, Mr E. Senior, and Mr. F. Matthews, sen. -

At the outset, the Secretary said he regretted the unavoidable absence of Lieut.-Col Newton, Mr William Allott, Mr. W. Machen, and Mr. W.J. Belk, whose engagements precluded their being present - Mr Wilkson also gave a resume of the presentation movement. - The Chairman met with a most hearty reception on rising to address the meeting. He submitted the usual loyal and patriotic toasts, which were duly acknowledged. Continuing, Mr. Slade said that during the 20 years he had been at Thorpe Hesley he had taken part in scores of public functions, but on no occasion had he felt so pleased and proud as when his friends asked him to attend that gathering. (Cheers) He was proud of his position that night. (Hear, hear.) They had met together to do honour to whom honour was due. (Applause) He was not going into the rights and wrongs of the great struggle in South Africa.

Those questions would have to be dealt with elsewhere. He could not, however, forget that some 12 months ago England and Englishmen were under a cloud. The reverses to our little army in the Transvaal moved the very heart of the nation, and every loyal subject of Her late Majesty was wondering and fearing what the morrow would bring forth. (Applause.) It was at this dark hour when their friend, Lance-Corpl. Matthews with hundreds of others, at home and abroad, came forward and volunteered to do battle for their beloved mother country. (Loud cheers.) these volunteers did not go to the front when matters were looking up; no-they stepped forth when their services were most wanted - and he had no hesitation in saying that the action of their kith and kin across the seas, joined with the home volunteers, did much to save this grand Empire of ours. (Loud cheers.) Therefore, the volunteers deserved all the praise, and nothing too much could be done to reward them for their services. So far as their little quiet hamlet was concerned, everyone was proud of Frank Matthews, and his friends would, that evening, show him their respect and esteem for him in a practical form. (Cheers.) Without saying anything more, he took that opportunity of presenting Corpl. Matthews with a handsome gold watch on behalf of his friends of that district. Mr. Slade then handed to Corpl. Matthews the watch referred to, which bore the following inscription:-

“Presented to Lance-Corpl. F. W. Matthews, by friends of Thorpe Hesley and district, in recognition of his gallantly serving his country in South Africa, 1900 - 1901.”

(Loud cheers.) - Corpl. Matthews suitably acknowledged the handsome present.

The presentation was accompanied with musical honours - During the evening a capital programme of vocal and instrumental music was gone through, and altogether a most enthusiastic and enjoyable time was spent. - A vote of thanks to the Chairman, to Mr. and Mrs. Parker, and to Messrs. Casson and Wilkinson, followed and the gathering ended with the singing of the National Anthem.

Three months later, on the 22nd. August 1901, Frank married Sarah Hoyland, daughter of the late Lucy Ann and Charles Hoyland, a well known figure locally as he had been both a master butcher in the neighbouring village of Chapelton, and also landlord of the Red Lion public house at Thorpe Hesley. Frank and Sarah set up house in Hesley Lane at Thorpe Hesley and their first child, Doris Ethel, was born there on 3rd. March 1902. A second daughter, Margaret, was born on 21st. September 1903. In May 1905 when Sarah was again pregnant, Frank was sent by the coal mine he worked for, to Spitzbergen, now known as Svalbard, an island 600 miles north of Norway and only 400 miles from the North Pole. The mountains here are composed almost entirely of coal and a group of



Corporal Francis William Matthews.
To the left the
Inscription states :-
Killed in Action near the
Dardanelles on the 29th.
April 1915. Presented by
the Kirkby-in-Ashfield Old
Comrades Association as a
mark of respect and high
esteem in which he was held
by his fellow members.

businessmen from Sheffield had bought a coal mine in Advent Bay, Spitzbergen, a venture which proved to be doomed to failure.

On Boxing day 1905, while Frank was in Spitzbergen, Sarah gave birth to their third daughter, who was named Hilda after Frank's younger sister. Frank stayed at the mine in Advent Bay for more than two years. The last year he was there, 1907, was a very dramatic year, both at the mine and in his personal life. Conditions were very harsh in Spitzbergen, many of the workers at the mine being Swedes who had gone there to escape the attention of the police. They were hard men and did not take kindly to the discipline that the English manager an ex-army officer tried to impose. This, combined with a shortage of their staple food - reindeer meat, led to a revolt during the early months of 1907.

To add to the upset, Frank's eldest child, Doris, died in May 1907 at the age of five, and Frank must have come home for the funeral. He finally left Spitzbergen in September 1907 when the mine was closed down, and went to work at Whitwell Colliery in Nottinghamshire. The family lived in Kirkby-in-Ashfield, first at Cobden Street and then Oxford Street. Their fourth daughter, Phyllis, was born in March 1908, six months after Frank came back from Spitzbergen, nine months after the death of his eldest daughter.

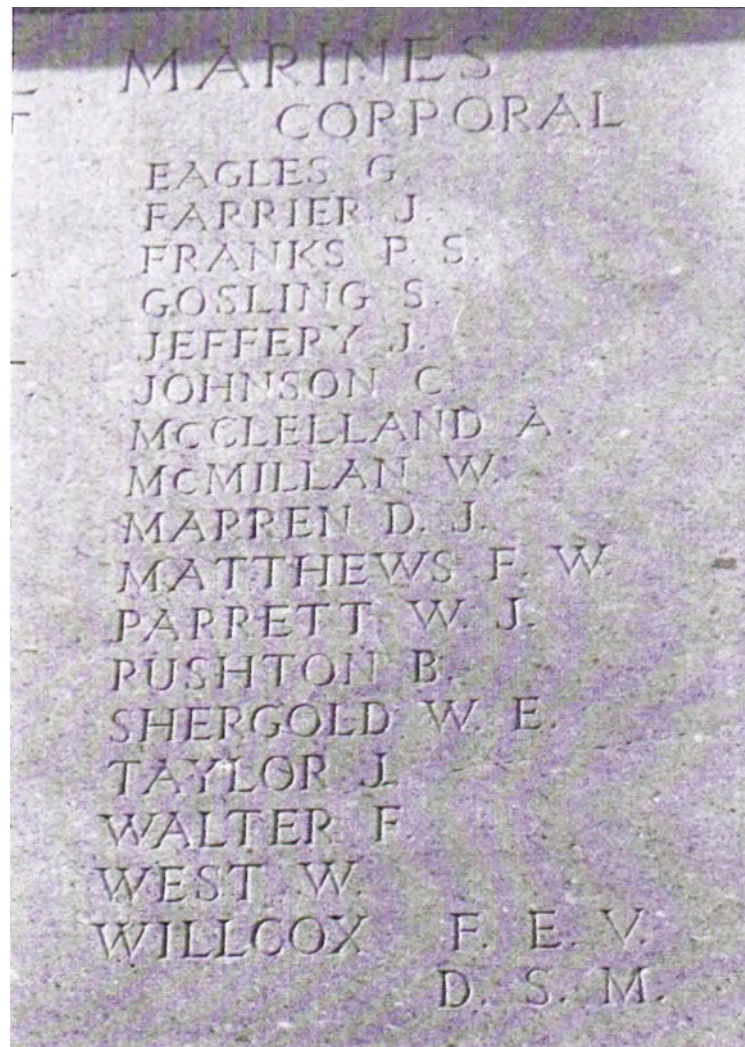
Life proceeded quietly for Frank and his family until the outbreak of the 1st World War in August 1914. He had been on the Special Reservists List since his discharge from the York & Lanc. Regiment in 1901, so he was quickly called up on 26th. August 1914 and since he was living in Nottinghamshire, he enlisted in the Sherwood Foresters. However, on 17th. September 1914 he was transferred to the Royal Marine Light Infantry, Portsmouth Battalion.

On 1st January 1915 he was promoted to Corporal and at the end of February he sailed from Avonmouth aboard the *Gloucester Castle*. He was part of the main body of the Royal Naval Division (R.N.D.) consisting of nearly 9,000 officers and men on their way to Gallipoli. At this time the advance party of R.N.D. of just over 2,000 was lying off Imbros, Greece as it had sailed from Devonport on 6th February.

By the time of the landings on the 25th April 1915 the whole of the shipped R.N.D. were mustered. Frank Matthews was, with the rest of the Portsmouth Battalion as well as the Chatham Battalion, landed at Anzac Cove on the 28th April 1915 to relieve the Australian forces on MacLaurin's Hill. The R.M.L.I. made their way up Shrapnel Gully and under heavy fire dug in on the south side. (See R.N.D. pages 169 to 173. Private Thomas Henry Baker's account of the operation) It was in this action that Corporal Francis William Matthews was killed. His service record shows he was 'Discharged Dead' on the 6th May 1915 but as the photograph shows he died on 29th April 1915. His body was never recovered so his name is recorded on the Helles Memorial.

This is a brief history of my grandfather, whom, of course, I never knew. I was looking through some family photographs and papers after the death of my father in 1995, and mentioned to my husband that my grandfather had been a Royal Marine killed at Gallipoli, a fact he had not known before. By a strange coincidence his father was also a Royal Marine who served at Gallipoli throughout the campaign with the Plymouth Battalion. His diaries were published in the R.N.D. Issue Number 5.

Aileen Thompson.



Name on Helles Memorial. Photograph Bob Thompson.

If you have an article, papers or photographs on any subject concerning the RND I will be pleased to hear from you.

The next issue, number 10 will be published in September 1999.

It will contain Part 2 of the Affair at Moerbeke, during the Antwerp Campaign.

The 3rd part of Thomas Macmillan's story, covering the period of stalemate and the evacuation of Gallipoli.

How some senior officers of the Army viewed the 63rd (RN) Division on the Western Front.

Trevor Tasker's article on a Memorial to the Missing was delayed and did not appear in the June issue of the R.N.D. however, it will now appear in September.

1974 - Gallipoli revisited by Joseph Murray of the Hood, together with his friend Dudley N. Lissenburg. Murray an author and well known character of the R.N.D. brings to life as few others could, his viewpoint so many years later as he looks back and remembers. Not to be missed.

And much more.

If you enjoyed the RND please tell a friend.

The photograph on the back page (832) is of Aileen Thompson (the author of the article on her grandfather Francis William Matthews) in Shrapnel Valley Cemetery, Anzac. It was on the right hand side that the Royal Marines dug-in on 28th April 1915 and where he was killed. Photograph by Bob Thompson.

