

25th August, 1915.

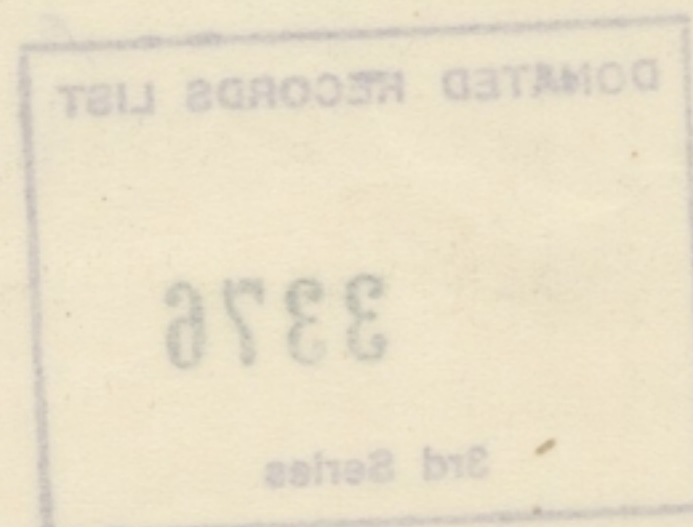
General The Hon. Sir J. Byng, K.C.M.M.G.
9th Corps.

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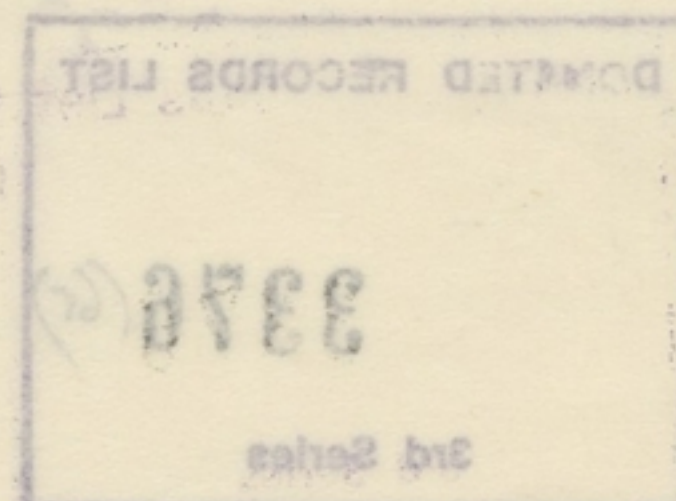
What I am writing to you about at present is, to ask if you cannot, as I am sure you will, straighten out your right flank a bit, which I know you will agree must be done. Originally my left was on the Damak Jelik Bair, but in the combined operations with your corps on the (----), I threw up my left to meet your movements, and it now runs from Kaiajik Aghala, through the Green Farm, to Susak Kuyu. I do not think, however, there was any intention of my ever permanently holding the ground to the north of the Damak Jelik Bair. I have, as you probably know, only three divisions, and have to cover a front from 68 L. right up to 92 M. You will see that it is a biggish bit of country, and most extraordinarily difficult with all its hills and ravines. Your force is stronger and I much hope you may be able to swing your right forward as far as, say, Kabak Kuyu and let it from there run up in a line due north, trending slightly west, after leaving Susak Kuyu.

I cannot help thinking that you will really have much difficulty in getting this line, as I see some of your people apparently moved a bit forward last night, evidently without any opposition at all. At present, I have to throw my left flank almost at right angles in a ridiculous way from Susak Kuyu, which is, of course, an absolute waste of men, and gives me a bad salient there.

If you can do anything to help in the line I have suggested,



we shall be most grateful, and I cannot help thinking that you will agree that it is sound. Your people will, of course, find everything ready for them in the way of entrenchments, communication trenches, etc., in all the bit which I hope you will be able to take over from us.



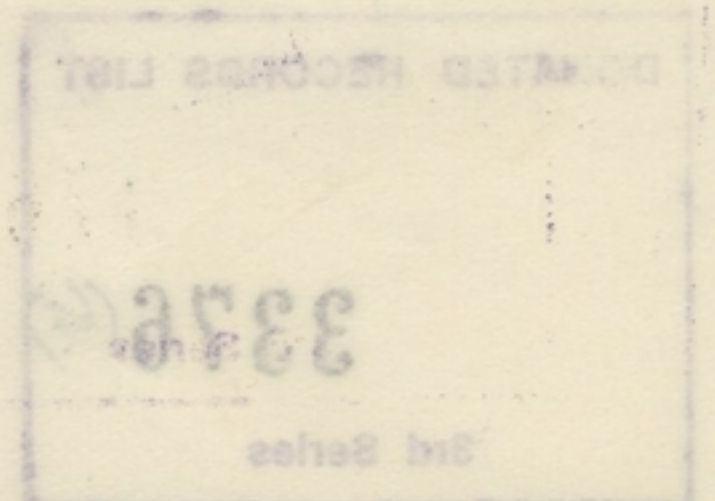
4th September, 1915.

General Sir H. V. Cox, K.C.M.G., etc.

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I quite agree with what you say about the 9th Corps' right, but I do not see what I can do in the matter at present, as I have already twice urged the 9th Corps to shove on the line you mention, and I have ~~al~~ hinted to G.H.Q. that they might urge this. I am told that Byng has decided not to do anything until he has got his different brigades in position properly searched out, and I understand that he will then consider the question of doing something. This, I personally think, is very unsatisfactory, but if nothing happens ere long, I will see if I can have another go at it, and many thanks for writing to me.

I will come over and see you again as soon as I can, but with all these new troops -- Australians and 54th Division, I feel I have to devote most of my time to them at present.

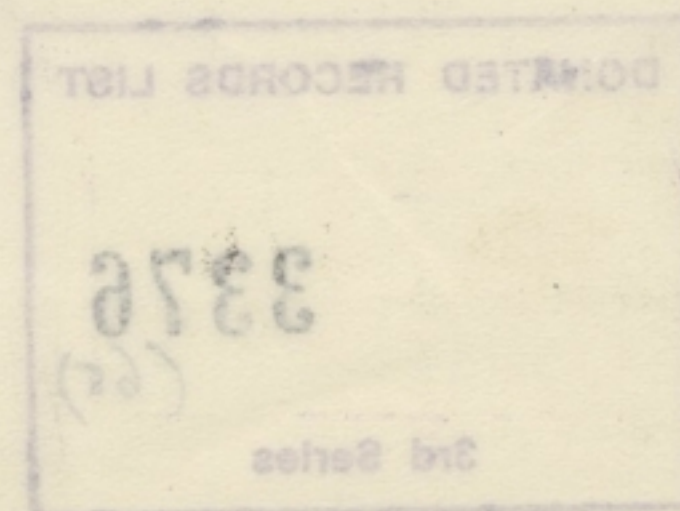


6th September, 1915.

Major-General W.P. Braithwaite, C.B.
C. G. S.

I am not quite sure what the 9th Corps propose doing on their right, and on my immediate left. As you know, at present their line turns almost due west at Susak Kuyu and avoids the Turkish trenches at Ari Kabak going north through Hetman Thair, and coming back at once again on Chocolate Hills. The result is there ~~xxx~~ is a bit of ground about 800 yards broad, South to North, and the same East to West, being held by the enemy in the big re-entrant which the 9th Corps line makes there. If this cannot be taken by assault so as to bring ~~xx~~ their right up to the line of Susak Kuyu -- Tikke Cheshme -- Chocolate Hills, what would you think of suggesting to them that from Susak Kuyu they might commence to cut a trench straight across North to Tikke Chesme? Work would have to be done at night, and would, of course, be slow, but it might also be started at the same time from either end to work South. The trench would, in the first instance, have to be made to face both? West, and would want wiring. I believe, however, that directly the Turks realise it would eventually cut them from Arie Kabak they would soon evacuate it, when the 9th Corps would be able to occupy a line in prölongation of mine. It would, at all events, seriously threaten their position and trenches North-West of Susak Kuyu, and would end what looks like a deadlock in that particular corner.

I only make this to you as a suggestion, but, perhaps, it might help ~~making~~ Byng to straighten out his line without loss.

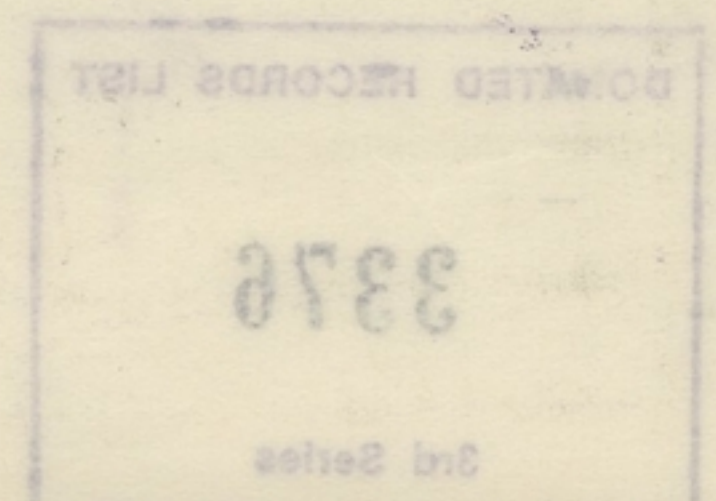


28th September, 1915.

Major-General P. W. Braithwaite, C.B.
C.G. S.

With reference to the possibility of Army Corps to extend their fronts in connection with our conversation yesterday, I write to let you know that I have been thinking over it more since I came back here, going into it on the map. I, of course, know well what the chief's views are, and, indeed, believe that they are exactly the same as all of ours, namely, that the last thing in the world that he loves is to have to haul back tired troops before they are rested. I do therefore hope that if I have to extend to my left, it may not be for any great distance, and I think that there are several points in this connection that might be considered.

To begin with, when we first started from Anzac, I think the general idea was that my left would be on the Damak Jelik Bair, and along the low hills running up towards Sari Bair. I do not think that anything definite was laid down about this, but it seemed to be a tacit understanding between ourselves and the 9th Corps, who originally came up to Susak Kuyu, and who asked me only to send forward patrols towards them to help them. I do not think that there was then any definite idea, that I should hold Susak Kuyu, and I did so only when their right fell back to Kazlar Chair, and there we have been ever since. I only mention this, as it seems to me that we already do hold rather more to our left than was originally anticipated.



My front, is, I think, about 11,500 yards, while I fancy that the 9th Corps have about 10,000 yards. I believe though that they are considerably stronger than I am, and even if the 10th and 53rd have to leave them, I think that they will still be as strong as I will be even ^{when} if the resting troops come back, in which case, it would seem only fair that they should continue to hold the line they actually do at the present.

The 29th Brigade goes off to them to-morrow. Irrespective of this I believe that they have always been able to have the luxury of a whole division in reserve, and I rather think an additional brigade. I do not think it is quite realised that ever since we have been here in April, we have not been able to have even a battalion, much less a brigade, in reserve, and all troops have been more or less in the fighting line. It is true that since the last fighting was over the 29th Brigade have given me something in the nature of a reserve, in that I have been able to employ two of their battalions continuously on beach duties, which, as you know, has been very heavy getting in our large quantity of supplies -- laying down tramway lines, preparing depots, levelling sites, etc., etc. Now that I am losing these I shall, of course, have to reduce the number of Australians in the trenches.

One another point I feel I have to bear in mind is, that as far as I can understand from Inglefield, the 54th Division do not expect reinforcements of any sort to come to them, in which case they must disappear in due course of attrition, as they are still losing a considerable number of men daily, and are getting practically none back.

If you would bear these points in mind when the chief is giving orders on the subject, I should be grateful. I only ask this, as I have come to the conclusion that possibly a good deal of the sickness among my men has been due to the fact of their being really overworked, when no reliefs were possible, and I do hope that when the troops now resting at Mudros do come back, I shall be in a position of being able to have a small reserve always in hand so as to avoid the excessive working of the men with.

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2nd Series

General Headquarters,
Medtn. Expeditionary Force.

General
Callwell.
26/10/15

26th October, 1915.

My dear Callwell,

Many thanks for yours of the 16th just received.

The return of Sir Ian from here came upon us all as a very sudden shock and personally I am so sorry that he should have thus gone, for he has always proved himself a most sympathetic and kind chief and whom it has been impossible not to like. Personally I have known him for 30 years and have naturally been glad to serve under him here. I can say he took his return perfectly marvellous and I do not think it would be possible for any man to appear more cheery than he was on going, although I know well he longed to stay and see the thing through.

Monro, I do not know, but I have heard nothing but good of him and I do sincerely trust that he will meet with success. I expect him here tomorrow or the next day, when I shall hand over my very temporary regime as Commander-in-Chief.

I can quite understand his not being altogether enamoured with the task in front of him, for it certainly is a big and most difficult one, but at the same time I am sure he must feel honoured at having been selected for such a command, and he can count on everyone here doing their very utmost to see him through with it.

The siding of Bulgaria against us has, of course, entirely altered the situation and must be the cause of anxiety. If, however, Greece and Roumania can still be induced to come in on our side, it should not matter so much, as between them they should be able to nip the Lines of Communication and prevent the Turk really securing very much. I am still hopeful that they may come in, and am
indeed

indeed not without hope, that if the russians can produce even a moderate sized force in Bulgaria, that the army and people may turn on their German King and refuse to fight with the Turk against Russia. Doing so, as they now are, must, I am convinced, be absolutely repugnant to the greater majority of them, and I quite hope that the future may have disagreeable surprises in store for King Ferdinand.

As soon as this new state of things appeared we all here naturally began to think of the possibilities of heavy German artillery coming in against us, and I at once started my own Army Corps at work digging caves everywhere, which would do not only as a protection against heavy shelling, but against the weather. Arrangements have, of course, been made for corrugated iron and wood, but I do not suppose we can ever hope to get all we want in this respect and certainly not in time. So it struck me that if I could arrange to house a great part of my force in caves, then when I get the material I should be able to cover in certain stretches of trenches and so get plenty of cover there also.

It is, of course, only in certain places that we can use caves without wooden props, which are not yet available, but where the earth stands by itself we have been very busy.

Though I have been very insistent upon this and have pointed out to everyone the possibilities, yet personally, I am doubtful as to whether we shall really be bothered so enormously as some people seem to fear, for even if Germany gets a continuous line of communication to Constantinople, the bringing down of really heavy guns with unlimited ammunition here, is still a big problem before her.

Our submarines still remain active in the Marmora

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and the Admiral tells me he is quite hopeful that they will be able to do this throughout the winter, as the weather there is not likely to be anything like as bad as what we must expect here. If they really can act successfully up there and go on destroying steamers in the way they have done, it will be extremely difficult for the Germans to get their heavy artillery here, as they would hardly like to risk their few battle-ships to transport them and the getting them by road through Thrace, once bad weather sets in, would be a very long job. This, of course, must not prevent one taking all precautions and we are doing what we can in the matter.

The troops are, I think, not dispirited - I can certainly answer for my own Corps and that is not by any means so and never has been for 5 minutes, but sickness, I am sorry to say, is still as bad, and I saw that only yesterday my evacuations from Anzac alone were 315. Why this should be it is hard to say, for the weather now is almost perfect and I have all along been hoping that during this month or so while the weather was cool, the men would all pick up and get strong so as to be able to resist the cold and damp later on, which I am so afraid will produce pleurisy and pneumonia, especially among my men who are not accustomed to a damp climate.

Australia assures me that they are going to do us well in the way of reinforcements, so I have hopes that we shall not long remain much below establishments.

Territorial Divisions are apparently the great difficulty. I have with me the 54th under Inglefield, and the complete Division is now only about 5,000 strong, while their evacuations daily are enormous. Inglefield tells me that he can apparently hope for very little in the way of reinforce-

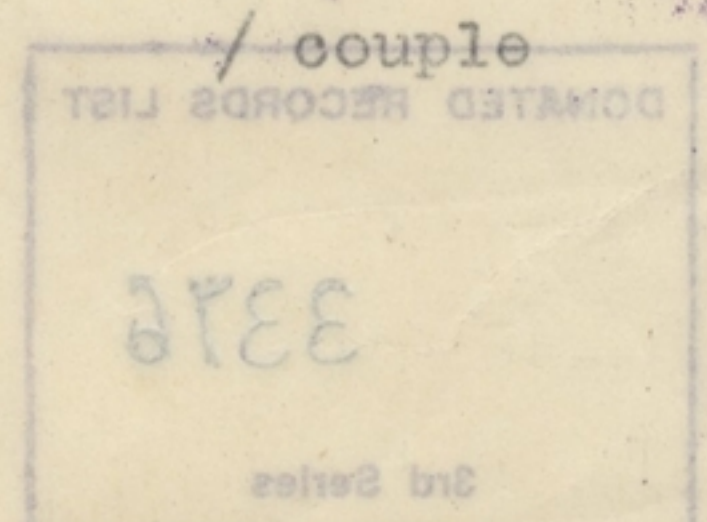
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ments, so as far as I can see this division must shortly disappear by transition, for it takes a tremendous long time for men to rejoin once they are affected with a slight attack of this prevailing mystery.

Water difficulties are, I am glad to say, on the high-way to being solved, and I personally do not feel much more anxiety in this respect. I have quite a decent reserve in hand at Anzac, and by stretching out as we did in August, we command a good bit of country where there is ample water. The doctors warn us that we shall not be able to drink any of the rain water that now falls, as the whole ground is so contaminated with corpses, but in practice I fancy we shall have to do this and must just boil our water and use it as we can and as troops have so often had to do before.

Personally, I have no doubt whatever that we must shove on from here, at all events so as to capture the high ground immediately dominating us. Unless and until we are in possession of the hills between Anafarta Sagir and Ejelmer Bay, Suvla Beaches and the transport there, we must be in constant danger.

It is marvellous to me how it is the Turks have not done much more damage than they have done, and I can only presume that they have not ammunition available. If the Germans even get a moderate amount of ammunition to them, they can make things so uncomfortable that it might be difficult to keep a force going specially from their base. This should all be altered if we get the hills I have mentioned, and I think we can undoubtedly do this if reinforced there by a



couple of good divisions.

Whether we shall then be able to make a further shove on Maidos remains to be seen, as it would depend very much upon our casualties in the meanwhile and upon those of the Turks.

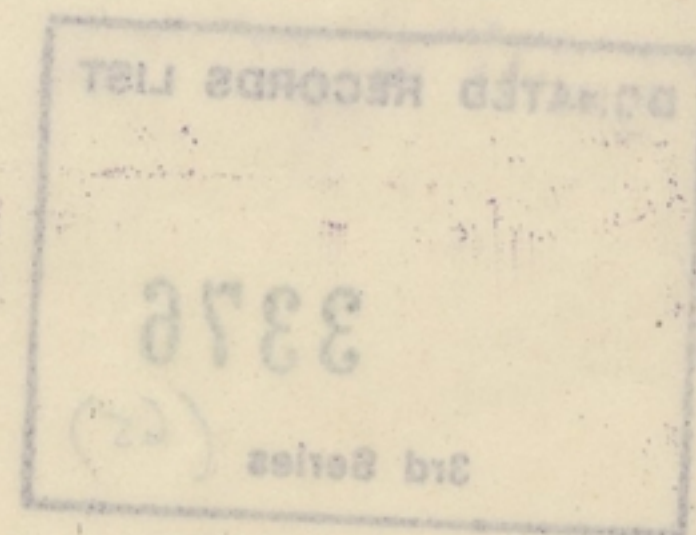
The first step undoubtedly will be to gain Hill 800 and . With this bit in our possession, I think we should be able to sufficiently command the whole Lines of Communication as to make the supply of Kilid Bahr impossible for the Turks. The whole country, however, is so difficult that even the first step must be a lengthy one, and unfortunately the Turks have been given so much time to dig, that they have made every position a small Gibraltar.

So many thanks for all the trouble you have taken as regards canteens and a "banana-ship" for us. Both will be most heartily welcomed here and I have no doubt whatever that if canteen stores, etc., can be continuously kept up, it will make a tremendous difference to the health of the troops.

I have not yet seen a complete Honours List, but such as were wired out gave tremendous satisfaction to the Australian and New Zealand troops and we are all so very grateful to Lord K. for having recommended these to His Majesty.

With kind regards and good wishes,

Yours very sincerely.



Headquarters,

Dardanelles Army,

2nd December, 1915.

Lord
Kitchener
2/12/15
[Blizzard]

Copy:-

Fd Marshal Earl Kitchener, K.G., K.P.,

I am sorry to say we have just had an uncommonly bad time of it here with a real blizzard, which has played havoc with some of my troops. It began with a severe blow from the South West with deluges of rain. This turned suddenly to almost a hurricane from the North East, bringing with it snow and sleet, while we had eleven degrees of frost. But for the tremendous wind it would not have mattered so very much, but this coming on top of the cold and wet completely bowled over a great many of the men who were badly situated. This was more especially the case with Byng's corps at Suvla, where you will remember there is a great deal of low-lying ground. The trenches there cross a series of watercourses, which have been quite dry the whole time we have been here. These suddenly rose in great spates - in some places seven feet deep, and of course came tearing down, not only the main streams, but through fire and communication trenches. In doing so a number of the men were swept away, while more were I am sorry to say killed by exposure. I have not yet got the total casualties, but Byng tells me there were about 150 killed from exposure, while he has had to evacuate about 6,500 from exhaustion, frostbite and trench feet. A great number of these will of course recover in a very short time with the effects of warmth and good food, but for the time being they are of course prostrat

I went over to see what could be done as soon as I possibly could, but with communications here what they are, you will realise that this could not be done at once, for we were absolutely cut off from all communications with each other for about three days. The small craft that had run across here

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to take shelter during the Southerly blow, were all caught when the wind turned, and I am sorry to say are all now piled up in havoc on the beach here. It is a most distressing sight to see nine picket boats all piled up on top of each other, and these of course mean a great loss to us in power.

Among Byng's men who suffered most severely were the 53rd Welsh Territorial Division, which practically "chucked" it. A great many men simply threw their rifles down and left their trenches, wandering down to get into hospitals, and nothing apparently would stop them, while one of the brigades of the 29th Division, which was in low-lying ground, also suffered extremely severely. It was only the troops on this low-lying ground who were affected very badly, those on the high ground on his left coming through all right.

At "Anzac" the Australians I am glad to say were absolutely all right. Two or three months ago I had urged upon them the necessity of digging really fine caves and tunnels for themselves, as I kept on saying that, though material for housing was under order, it was more than possible that bad weather would arrive before it. They were fortunate in having hilly country, in which digging as you saw was possible, and had consequently made more or less comfortable places for all of them.

The Indian Brigade on their left I am sorry to say suffered however a good deal. Two of the Gurkha regiments were caught just as they were relieving a Territorial Brigade, who were being withdrawn into the supporting line, and suffered very severely from exposure - in one battalion alone some 280 men having to be evacuated for trench feet. This, too, is such a distressing thing to see, as the men have to hobble about with their feet wrapped up in sacking, until they can be carried off. In the case of one unfortunate Havildar, the doctors tell me that both his feet will have to be amputated, as I hear he absolutely refused to take his boots off when he

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began to feel his feet going. It has all been a most distressing episode, and I do not know that there is anything that could be done to ameliorate matters.

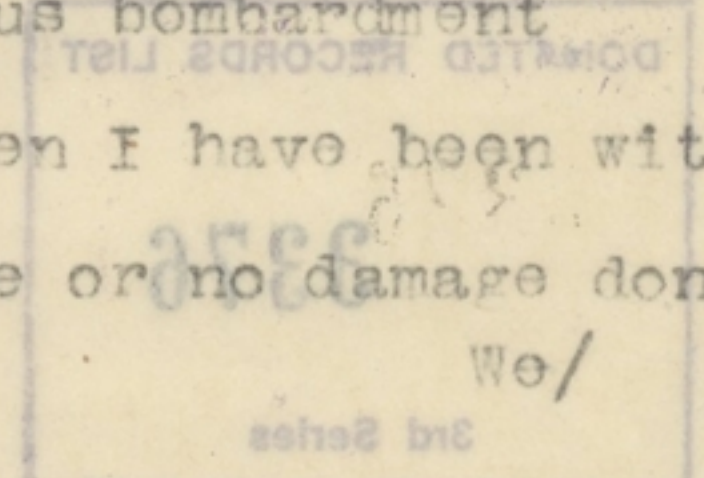
At Helles the situation was much as at "Anzac," and there have been no great casualties there.

Though our casualties have been very heavy, yet it is a decided comfort to realise that the Turks have evidently been very much worse off than we have. On the tops of hills as they are, they came in for a worse dose of cold, and there trenches are still full of snow. When the spates came down, many Turkish bodies, dead mules and wagons were washed down with them, while a serjeant, who has just come in as a deserter, said that practically the whole of his company was wiped out, and that they lost two machine guns in the flood. This of course was only over a very small part of the front, and everywhere they must have lost nearly as heavily. Then

Then again, when they were flooded out of the trenches, they in many cases had to retire across the open, when our men shot large numbers of them. They apparently have no warm clothing, and no blankets, so they must be in a really bad way. The German forethought however at once arranged to bring up all their reinforcements to relieve the troops who had suffered, and in this respect they have the great advantage over us, as we have not the troops available to do this.

It has apparently been a real piece of bad luck getting this bad weather so early in the year, as all the local inhabitants tell us that such storms are practically unknown before Christmas, and even then they are never more severe than what we have now been through.

The Turks evidently seem to have got a new supply of ammunition, as there has been a continuous bombardment going on over my head this last two days when I have been with the troops, but I am glad to say with little or no damage done.



We hear, however, that an Austrian battery of 25's, and a German battery of 35's are on their way to the peninsula, so I suppose we may expect them to be in use against us before long. I trust however that our men will be sufficiently well dug in to withstand a good deal of bombardment, and they cannot have unlimited ammunition.

We are still waiting definite orders from Home as to future action, and I am afraid that the departure of de Robeck, and Weymss's consequent recommendations Home, will have put the whole case in the melting pot again, which is rather trying, as it keeps us in such an uncomfortable state of waiting - that, however, I know you cannot help.

I see that after all you had to go to Italy on your way Home, and I am glad to see that the "Cross of Savoy" has now been added to your other decorations.

With the best of all good wishes for the coming Year, and let us hope that it will bring peace before it is over.

Yours ever,

