

COPY

25 Sept 33

THURLBY HALL
Lincoln.

Dear Mr. Park.

Many thanks for your letter the details of which bring back to me so vividly the happenings of that wonderful night of the Evacuation, which was so splendidly carried out by every single man ashore, & every one of whom will I am sure look back with real & justifiable pride to the part played by him & all his comrades. I wish I could help you in the matter about which you write - the more so as C.C. Riddell is a cousin of mine (my name too), but I fear I am unable to do so. I have to say this as you will probably realise I have had at least a dozen letters all on just the same lines as yours, claiming to have been the last man to leave the shore that night or later early morning, to all I have only been able to say as I do to you - I was up & down the coast all night in H.M.S. "Chatham" - the night was dark & embarkation took place simultaneously at several points along the coast. Those on our extreme left when we joined "Suvla" claim they were the last - you also do so! What I can say is that you occupied a most important position & from what you tell me you evidently carried out what was entrusted to you capitally. I only regret you had no orders to blow C.1. & C.2. also! But as you know I was in command of & responsible for both Anzac & Suvla then & naturally could not go into all details at both places. At all events I am very glad you did however come through everything as you did & it is a pleasure to see how fit you are now 18 years after & so young still! All good wishes to you -

Your old comrade.

W.R. Birdwood.

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