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as up till then they ~~were~~ ^{were} bombarding our trenches.

The evacuation itself was carried out without a hitch but we can thank God for the weather, which was absolutely perfect for our plans. Ever since the snow, and the freezing wind which followed it, we have had calm warm days and nights, with lately a moon approaching her full but with very often a mist filling the atmosphere.

I knew for certain what was to be done four days before, and was at first told I was to be among the last party to leave. The night following that news I certainly felt excited and nervous, but I was all right after that till Saturday night when the first big party left. I think everyone felt the strain a bit then, just as the party was going off, and for about half an hour afterwards, after that we felt quite all right.

~~It was on Sunday night~~ ^{On Sunday night} the rest of the regiment left, and was divided



S. S. "ANCHISES"

22.12.15

My Dear Mother

As I expect you know by now, ^{Stuzac} ^{& Suvla} have been evacuated without a casualty. A few guns were left behind, but they were all old and of course were blown up before being deserted; most of the stores were burnt in an accidental fire a couple of nights before, a fire which we were very frightened might give the show away to the Turks, but which I think they must have thought was set off by their shells. The rest of the supplies were to be shelled by our boats when the enemy discovered we were gone, which they did not do, till two o'clock the next afternoon at any rate,

into three parties A, B, and C. Each of these was again divided into three leaving a quarter of an hour after one another. I was changed from the C party to B 3 which left at ten past ten. The A party left about six B at about ten, and C about two thirty next morning. Three officers and 27 men were in this last party for the regiment.

The moon in the early part of that night had a perfect rainbow round it, but this afterwards disappeared. It was bright moonlight marching down, and very impressive seeing parties coming from all directions in silence, with padded feet to deaden any sound, and all making for their appointed places to the tick of time. Then out at sea the transports lay at anchor, with boats plying busily backwards and forwards to the shore and the brilliantly lighted hospital boats in deep contrast to the others, which were without a light.

You will probably hear wild rumours of men left behind,

At one case of a 13th Battalion man is true. He was a sentry in a tunnel, and fell asleep. He awoke with a pain in the tummy (only too common at Anzac), and on going out found the trenches deserted. He raced for the beach, and arrived without rifle or pack in time for one of the last boats. The tale he now tells himself is a very different addition, and much more heroic, but I think this is right.

As to the evacuation itself, I think it was a great move since it has been done successfully, as the men suffered cruelly in the cold, which we had. The Australians and New Zealanders certainly had a good many cases of frost bite, and some of my toes haven't got their circulation back yet, but it was the Tommies at Suva, who lost. I don't know the figures at all, but hundreds died, and the number ran up to thousands who were sent away owing to the exposure. This was partly due to

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and sent out meant that we
did not get the full advantage of
them.

We arrived in Lemnos harbour
early Monday morning, and after
several changes were put on this
boat, and sailed Tuesday afternoon.
It was rather funny, as some
Tommys came on board that
afternoon, and as usual their officers
had tons of kit. We were all
jeering at the gang of men
carting up huge palises, bundles of
swords, tent chairs and different things,
and wondering if they would get
them on in time. They didn't
manage to do so however, and
the Captain had the gangway
hauled up leaving a good bit
of baggage and some men behind.

After all we only reached
the mouth of the harbour that
night, owing to an accident.
We just missed running into



S. S. "ANCHISES"

5
the nature of the country, and
partly that there are such a
lot of city men among them.
I am afraid the Australians
haven't much of an opinion of
a Tommy now. It is a pity but
we have only seen second rate
regiments, and the Australian
seems much quicker at inventing
things, which are useful for trench
warfare. The English fought in
France nine months before the
Australians began, yet the latter
weren't at the front a month, before
they invented the periscope rifle,
a thing, which has been invaluable
to us, and which the enemy
has not yet been able to make
successfully. They have too invented
a good many other things, but the
time it took to get them made

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a large boat, which steamed
across our bows by stopping dead,
and putting down four anchors. Then
when we tried to sail again
the wind caught us, owing to
our having no way off, and we
had to make for a channel
between two rows of boats at
anchor. A smaller boat however
was coming up behind, and
being unable to turn aside
owing to these boats had
nothing left to do, but run
into us. She only broke one of
our life boats and some railings
though, as well as her own bow,
and after that we anchored for
the night setting forth this morning.

I have forgotten to tell you
that an Austrian battery of
12 1/2" guns began to fire on us
on Saturday evening, and for
which we had been preparing
by digging bunk holes. It if
believed gave Lone Lane a

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great doing all Monday morning
after everyone had left. Shells of
that size are rather expensive
too.

Also to show you how we were
favoured by the weather; on Tuesday
morning it blew a gale from
the South, which made embarking
impossible at Stuzac & Suola,
so we only got off with one day
to spare.

Christmas morning, and we have
just taken the pilot on board to
go into Alexandria, and feeling
very pleased that we have escaped
the submarines. The sun is just
rising over the city in a yellow
Eastern sky, which is very pretty, so
I think I shall go up on deck
to look at it. I must try to
send a cable as soon as possible
to wish you a joyful Xmas, and
let you know that we are back
in Egypt once more.

I am

Your affectionate son
Nat. J. Barton.

EXTRACTS FROM THE LETTERS OF MAJOR NATHANIEL DUNBAR BARTON.

7th Light Horse Regiment, A.I.F.

Grazier; of Wellington, N.S.W.; born Wellington, 5th June, 1894; appointed a 2/lieutenant in the 7th L.H. on 20/11/14; promoted lieutenant 1/5/15. temporary captain 15/10/15; captain 12/3/16; major 8/9/16; appointment terminated 27/11/18.

6/8/16.

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We got back to camp about 11 pm. on the night of the 3rd after being out since 1 am. in the morning, and in touch with the Turks. Then we were called out again at 1.15 am. on the morning of the 4th to the sound of shots exchanged between the 1st L. H. Bgde and the enemy. After getting things ready we turned in again about 2.30 am. then up and into it at 4 am. We advanced about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the camp, then the men lined a ridge. They had to advance about 400 yds from there on to another ridge to support the 1st Bgde. Meanwhile our led horses were being shelled with shrapnel and high explosive and it was very funny to see them put their tails down when a shell burst just behind them. The led horses were ~~ten~~ taken on to be nearer the firing line and the 1st Bdg. retreated through us.

Colonel Onslow did splendidly. He led the men on to the ridge, 50 yds ahead of anyone and the regiment held it under shrapnel from the front, and machine gun fire from three sides, till all the 1st Bdg. were clear.

We then retired to a ridge behind and rallied there for a time and in the retirement from there a wrong order came from someone that the men were to go back on foot. I let one troop go mounted then got the order direct from Sutton, so took the rest of the horses back without riders, then had to return with them again as the men were about knocked up. We held that ridge all day, our left flank being held by the infantry in

their redoubts, which they have had thousands of natives digging for the last two months.

Col. Boyston is splendid/ They call him galloping Jack but everyone swears by him now. He had this Brigade well under control, knows when to push and pushes hard. Our men brought back all the wounded under heavy fire on tired horses, no matter how badly wounded they were, and did not seem to mind even machine gun fire. It is said 15,00 Turks attacked our 2 Brigades at that time. During the day we linked up with the N. Z. Brigade, 3rd Bdg. and Yeomanry Bdg. We were heavily shelled where some of C Sqdn. and some of B Sqdn were in the afternoon, and Cossack got a shrapnel pellet in the off flank and is now in the Mobile Section. Before this, while I was on him a spent bullet hit the front of one of the panels of my saddle and was stopped by a piece of iron from entering him, so he had a narrow squeak.

At four o'clock next morning, the 5th, the whole line advanced in a bayonet charge. Colonel Onslow was hit at close quarters by a bullet which went between the bone of his thigh and femoral artery. I forgot to mention Major Windeyer was hit the morning before so Sutter now has the regiment. The C.O. and Windeyer are both doing well, and the former is expected back in about 10 weeks, it is doubtful about the latter.

The Wellingtons (N.Z's) and the 7th captured about 1000 prisoners and 7 machine guns, the prisoners including about 7 Germans I know of. We then advanced, mounted. The Brigadier, who was hit the afternoon before in the leg was not allowed to come. This Bdg. went right forward, the N.Z. leading the 7th on the right. The N.Zs did splendid work and if they had had anyone to support them could have taken Qatia and routed the army, I think. We captured a Field Ambulance entire camel and all and an ammunition column with about 400,000 rounds of ammunition. We managed to water our horses there, got

some dates, dried apricots and wheat for ourselves, which just about saved us and waited for the remainder of the Div. If only our Brig. Boyston had been there I think we could have routed the remainder but Col. Meldrum of the Wellington Regt. could get no-one to support him and in the end we had to wait till 2.15 pm. before attacking Qatia. By that time the Turks had brought up fresh men and the whole Division could not shift them.

We were again terribly lucky with our led horses, hardly any of them being hit, all the shelling going too far. It almost seemed as if we had a special protection from Heaven. The Yeomanry on our left, the first we have seen of them since they cut up in April when they fled for their lives, let us down again. They are the limit. The attack having failed we returned to camp at 7 pm reaching here at about 10 pm. This squadron had 1 killed, 3 died of wounds, and 12 wounded. Cpl. Curran, who was brought out under escort for his trial was the one killed while rescuing wounded. This regiment had 6 killed, 3 died of wounds, 47 wounded, I think the 6th having practically the same. Our horses fared better than most, the 6th and several of the other Brigades not getting water for theirs for 48 hours.
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We are resting today and the infantry have taken Qatia without a shot and have advanced towards Oghratina. So far, but for them holding the left flank and drawing the fire of the Turks 6 in. gun, it has been a Light Horse Battle.

The Tommy Infantry here is a bit worse even than the Yeomanry, or rather some of it as the Scotch element is good, a lot of the others get so scared when they see us returning at night that they become speechless. We only had four guns to support our attack on Qatia yesterday; they had very little ammunition and were practically useless though there were

magnificent targets. The order for the Yeomanry yesterday was "Retire on Romani, every man for himself." We retired half an hour later without fresh casualties and I believe the Turks must have retired pretty well simultaneously with us. Our burying party today brought in 4 mountain guns and 2 more M.G.'s which were captured by the N.Zs. We have lost some of our best men, which must be expected, but it is very sad. Cpl. Curran was killed and L/Cpl. Bell, Baden, and Dunkinson died of wounds in this squadron, Bell died this afternoon. ...

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29th March, 1917.

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.... We had reveille at quarter to one on Sunday morning and marched most of Sunday. Then that night we were up at one and marched round to the N.E. of Gaza, this regiment being the advance guard, A Sqdn. doing the screen. The first excitement we had was watching some of the men in the latter squadron spurring their horses and riding hell for leather after some garries which they just managed to catch. After that they missed a glorious chance of getting two Taubes - the men saw them down on the plain, while they were on the top of a steep bank, but seeing them from above like that they could not be sure they were not ours and did not dare to fire, and by the time the officer had come up they had got a move on, and their shots missed.

Next they recaptured two of the Brigadier's horses which had got away from his groom and galloped along the road towards Gaza. Some Turks caught and tied them up but our fellows coming along collared the lot.

The next chase was after bigger game - the general in command of the 53rd Turkish Division and his Staff who were, I

believe, in command when Gen. Townsend was captured. The lads caught the General and most of his Staff but one of his Staff officers had too fast a horse and escaped.

We were not sent in to help the Infantry till pretty late in the afternoon and then one of my troops got a bit astray in the huge cactus plantation we had to pass through. They got in among our friends, the New Zealanders, and with them captured two 4.2. Austrian guns and had some almost hand to hand fighting on the outskirts of Gaza.

The remainder of us did not have such an exciting time as the Turks gave themselves up pretty easily and especially after it became dark. Still the regiment had an enormous frontage to cover, and we, with most of the others in the division, had to cut our way through cactus hedges four to six feet high and from ten to fifty yards apart. That night we were withdrawn much to our disgust, as we were right to the town. This opened the door to reinforcements and next day the infantry had to retire.

We were wishing the 3rd or 1st Bdg. had been with our division instead of the Yeo-manry, who have by no means risen in our eyes. Still I am thankful to think that this Brigade and this regiment came out with credit.

In our withdrawal we marched the whole night long owing to faulty guiding, with scarcely a stop, and as it was the third pretty strenuous night, we were very tired. Up till now I have thought being sleepy on horse back was about the most painful thing imaginable, but that night I slept going along quite comfortably, and as nearly everyone did the same, there was a bit of a jumble up of units. Since then we have not done much, but today, the 31st, is the first quiet one we have had and last night the first full night.

We are now bivouaced between a fresh water lake and the sea, so are fairly revelling in it.

One Wellingtonian, last Monday, captured a chair while going through one of the houses and carrying it along with him, sat on it to fire through the cactus, and it also helped him to get through the hedges.

Some others captured a lorry with four horses, and rode down on it till things became too warm. This regiment captured 150 of the enemy altogether, out of about 700 taken by the whole force, and the Colonel is very pleased with things in general, but we are all chewing our cud and filled with thoughts of what might have been, if only -----

The two men who actually captured the general were Birchell and Price, the latter was a mate of Brian's on the voyage over this last time, and the prisoner told the Brigadier that he would rather have been shot than laughed at in the way they laughed at him. What all set them going I am told was that they offered him "Half a Mo" cigarette, our worst issue and seeing a General smoking this tickled them immensely.

It is now the 3rd, and we spent a very enjoyable Sunday yesterday. I went to early morning service and then again to church Parade in the evening. Our Padre is delicate, can't preach for sour tarts, and his voice cracks every second word, but he is sincere, which covers everything, and consequently we all like him, and rejoice in having him with us.

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6/4/17.

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I am afraid my last letter was more misleading to you than any newspaper, as you expect my reports to be true, and

my account certainly sounded like a splendid success, very different from what it really was. The guns too, which we captured were not 4.2, as it said in the first bulletin we received, but about 10 pounders, that is according to Snow, who helped to capture them. However I am going to copy a message out to send you, which gives us a pat on the back:-

"I wish to thank you personally for the very fine work accomplished by the Division under your command in the action on 26th, and especially for the skilful way in which you withdrew the Cavalry in the dark after their long day's work against the enemy.

Will you express to all ranks under your command my admiration for their splendid behaviour before the enemy. It was no light task to delay the advance of greatly superior hostile forces throughout the whole day on a front of nearly twelve miles and at the same time be able to put in a strong attack by two Brigades to assist the Infantry in the attack on Gaza. Two hours more daylight would have enabled the Cavalry to finish the job and it must have been most disheartening to your men after such a fine effort to have the prize snatched from their grip by darkness. The harder the task I give to the Mounted Troops of the Desert Column, the better they carry it out and no man could wish to command finer troops."

To-day is Good Friday, but I have not been to Church, and we have had a painful day - an arms and saddlery inspection by our Divisional Commander with all that that carries with it. We received our extra kit yesterday, I am glad to say, so have a bivvy once more and eating utensils. They can quite easily be done without, but it is very nice to get them.

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