

PUBLIC HOSPITAL,
Alexandria.

6th. May, 1915.

My dearest Mother,

Well, we have been in Action at last; of course, you heard all about our landing at the Dardanelles a few hours after it took place. I have had the most vile ill-luck; I have not been wounded, but somehow I contracted poisoning in my left fore-arm. It all swelled up, became very painful and absolutely useless to me, so I was sent back here with the wounded. Coming back in the boat, the Doctors called it septic poisoning, but here they call it "erysipelas of the arm". It became bad the second day ashore. It is really vile luck to have escaped the bullets, and to have struck this, but I hope soon to be well again, and to get back to the Front as soon as possible.

We went on board H.M.S. "LONDON" on Saturday, 24th. April, and from there we were landed in boats early Sunday morning. It was hoped we might land without the Turks' knowledge, and with that object in view, the Scouts (about twentyfive of us) were packed up in the bows of the leading boat, so that as soon as we got ashore, we could push ahead and try and locate the enemy. When within about three hundred yards of the shore, the enemy opened rifle and machine gun fire on us. As soon as our boats grounded, we leapt into the water and waded ashore; we then threw off our packs, fixed bayonets and went straight up the hill. It was now about four o'clock in the morning and light. As we pressed on, the enemy retired (I do not think there were many of them in this particular spot, as they evidently had not expected us to land here judging from the absence of any wire-entanglements or mines, etc.) After getting to the top of the Ridge, we halted and waited for the others to come up. All this time I had not seen a sight of any Turk, and nobody else seems to have seen them, but from the top of the ridge we could see them scooting away, and we sent a few shots after them. All the way up the hill we had not fired a shot.

This first landing was done by the Third Brigade - that is the 9th., 10th. and 11th. Battalions landing on different parts of the beach (I should have said 9th., 10th., 11th. and 12th. Battalions). There were a good many casualties, many chaps being hit in the Boats and on the shore; personally, I did not see any-

body hit up to this time.

We now halted, and the Companies re-formed. The scouts were placed in position as "Observation Patrols", and after a while the troops went forward and left us in the rear. I really cannot understand why we were left in the rear to observe; it left us nothing to observe and report on. We stayed there several hours, when the enemy began shelling the ridge we were on, and as we were doing no good, we shifted. Puckle and I were together at this time, and we joined a string of fellows going up to the Front. Eventually Puckle and I got separated, and I found myself with some New Zealanders up at the Front on the extreme left wing. Eventually we had to retire, and I and a small lot of chaps got cut off, and had to escape down a steep gully to the beach to avoid capture. We were then right out of the fight, so went back to Headquarters; we could not get back to the Firing line.

That night all un-wounded men at Headquarters were mustered up and sent to re-inforce and entrench on a ridge on our left. We spent the greater portion of the night in digging ourselves in, and in the morning we had a little firing, but not much, as the guns from the Warships silenced the shrapnel batteries, and the enemy retired.

About 10 a.m. Monday a few of us who belonged to the third Brigade were sent back to Headquarters, as word had come along that our brigade was re-forming there. On arrival we found our Brigade had re-formed, and gone back to the Front; we then decided to have a short rest, and follow them. The rest of them lay down to sleep, but I saw a Sergeant of our Company in the distance, and I went to him; he was in exactly the same position as I was - trying to find our own Battalion. We decided to have a short rest, and then push on, but just as we lay down, an Officer came along and asked us to take charge of some ammunition, mules and their Native Indian drivers that were going to the front. So we set off straight away - the sergeant in front and myself behind, and a hard job I had - the brutes in the rear would not keep up, and I could not make the native drivers understand anything. Eventually we got near to the Front, and the shrapnel was dropping very thickly. Word came from the Front to drop the ammunition and take the mules back for more, which we did. On arriving back at the beach it was sundown, and I was absolutely deadbeat, but I and some other fellows managed to boil some tea, and have a bit of a meal, then lay down on the Beach and slept all night. All Monday afternoon my arm was very painful and swollen, and next morning I saw the Doctor, who sent me on to the Boat, and I eventually arrived in the Hospital here.

This is an Egyptian Government Hospital, English Doctors in charge, with English nurses, with Native doctors, who do some of the dressing and native attendants. I do not know how many wounded there are here, considerably over one hundred. I am afraid

I will not be fit to go back before another fortnight.

Up till Monday night - that is two days after we landed - Puckle was going strong; I hope he is still alright. I think he is - I have not heard of his being sent back, and I saw some of our fellows from another Hospital yesterday.

I had a nasty feeling the first time a man was shot alongside me, but when first going under fire, I was not so nervous as I expected to be; of course, we had no time to think - we had to go straight up the hill.

Good-bye for the present - with love to all.

I remain,

Your affectionate son,

(Sgd.) DONALD G. CAMPBELL.

P.S. All the time since leaving Egypt, we were anchored in the Harbour of the Island of Lemnos, about forty miles from The Dardanelles; it is a small Island, mostly inhabited by Greeks. I had never heard of it until we went there. (D.G.C.)