

**AWM4**  
**Australian Imperial Force unit war diaries,  
1914-18 War**

Formation Headquarters

**Item number:** 1/4/7 Part 5

**Title:** General Staff, General  
Headquarters, Mediterranean  
Expeditionary Force

October 1915



AWM4-1/4/7PART5



SECRET.

5196

Copy of minute written by C-in-C. before leaving  
England.

Oct 1915.

C.I.G.S.

Before proceeding to the Dardanelles there are certain factors of infinite importance which I desire to place before the Secretary of State for War.

- (1) Units of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force must be brought up to, and maintained, at war strength; this could be arrived at by the Army Council anticipating and not waiting to hear our requirements. Many important issues are connected with this question. If we have weak battalions varying daily in strength the men are left too long in the trenches and their physical condition suffers - constant and frequent relief is the basis of trench warfare.
- (2) Trench Mortars must be supplied and I am anxious to have, as early as possible, a large number of Stokes guns with properly trained personnel organized as special units on the same lines as trench mortar batteries.
- (3) The security of the line held is very much dependent on an efficient air service combined with wireless telegraphy.
- (4) All Territorial Units should be supplied with the 18-pdr. gun.
- (5) An expert is required at once in each division to advise on the subject of cooking.
- (6) With a view to sustaining the moral of the troops, one band per division is essential.
- (7) A proper tube smoke helmet for each man (and two if possible) is absolutely necessary.



362

"O".

I visited 9th Corps Headquarters today and saw General Byng and Brig.Gen.Reed.

I informed them:-

(a) of the difficulties we have to face at HELLES, as well as SUVLA and the consequent necessity for withdrawing 87th Bde. from 29th Div.

(b) that the Artillery for the 10th Divn. is still under consideration by the War Office, but that we would inform them as soon as any decision was reached.

(c) that a strong protest had been cabled home against withdrawing any more troops and that it is hoped the 53rd Divn. will be left at SUVLA.

2. General Byng appeared to appreciate the situation and to be prepared to maintain his position without the 87th Brigade, provided the 53rd Division is left with him. He is anxious to have more guns. He also appeared to think ANZAC should be made to extend to their left. I informed him that ANZAC has fewer men per yard than SUVLA, and that rest for the Australians and New Zealanders who have been out since April is imperative.

Ask.

A.  
done.

3. I was asked to enquire whether the 1st/7th Welsh Fusrs. (53rd Divn.), employed in charge of prisoners at MUDROS, could be relieved, possibly by the surplus drafts now collecting there, and sent up to rejoin.

Capt. Anstey ?

It was not Col. Nichol's suggestion, but B.G.R.As. You should let Gen. Reed know this when opportunity offers. Yes, certainly see this is done please.

4. Lieut. Col. Nichol interviewed neither General Byng nor Brig. Gen. Smith on the subject of the 9.2 hows. His report does not represent their views. They would never have suggested LALA BABA, but have selected a very promising site in a gully on the S. side of the KIRETCH TEPE SIRT from which fire could be directed on CHUNUK BAIR and BATTLESHIP HILL, TURSHEN KEUI and both ANAFARTAS; but neither KOJA DERE nor BOGHALI. This involves a reconsideration of the problem, dealt with on File G.S.R.177.

C.G.S.

You have decided to await the O.C. Batty's arrival before final decision where to locate these Hows.

5. Brig. General Smith (who has an intimate knowledge of these weapons) is strongly of opinion that they should not be separated, chiefly owing to the impracticability of dividing up certain spare parts, repairing outfit and the repair lorry.

If they were sent to ANZAC General Byng would then ask whether he could have some of the 6" Hows. from there.



C.G.S.

This seems to be a very general opinion. Perhaps you will discuss with D.A.G.

Capt. Anstey.

Ask D.D.O.S.

C.G.S.

I will discuss this with Wells.

B.G.

You know all about this.

C.G.S.

I'm sure it would, but "A" always tell me they are not allowed to go on the peninsula half as often as they want to. I think if you would suggest to D.A.G. the advisability of sending fellows over regularly it would be a great help. He has a larger staff now, & could easily arrange.

I have already (2 days ago) spoken to D.A.G. on this subject, but it will do no harm for you to rub it in to Wells who I am sure will appreciate the fact.

As regards the training of young officers from England at MUDROS, General Byng, so far as he is concerned, would prefer to see them posted direct to battalions, believing they would learn quicker and better from Adjutants and Company Commanders.

6. Re 18-pdr. H.E. shell, Brig. General Smith has found 41 which do not pass the gauge and is of opinion that in this, rather than in the fuze, lies the cause of recent prematures. He is anxious to have another gauge sent him if possible.

7. Regrettable ill-feeling has been caused by the misinterpretation of a letter from "A" on the subject of the system now in force of sending up new drafts on arrival in preference to returned sick and wounded who are retained at Base Depots for the time, together with a proportion of officers and N.C.O's. I tried to remove the misunderstanding, but I really could not grasp the 9th Corps point of view, and was not sufficiently conversant with the details of the problem. The feeling, however, in the matter is very keen indeed and the letter appears to be regarded as a masterpiece of inefficiency. All assurances I put forward to the effect that the problem is in extremely capable hands and utmost efforts are being made to meet deficiencies of personnel, were met by quotations from personal letters from Officers on the L. of C. saying they are kicking their heels doing nothing and can't get sent up. I think a visit from an officer of "A" might do much good.

8. I visited the 10th Div's late section of the line now taken over by 13th Divn. The trenches had evidently been left in an unusually dirty state. The 13th Division gave me a very good impression. They had cleaned up the trenches considerably. Their rifles and bayonet were well kept; men were cheery; officers all had ideas of how they were going to improve their trenches etc. These are poor but their siting is particularly bad in the section on the N. slopes of GREEN HILL, where they are either just on the reverse slope of a low ridge or have thick bushes within ten yards. There is no second line about here.

/Both



~~I have already  
(2 days ago)  
spoken to D.A.G.  
on this subject,  
but it will do no  
harm for you to rub  
it in to Wells who  
I am sure will  
appreciate the fact.~~

C.G.S.

This is  
practically what  
we suggested,  
except that they  
have given 11th  
Div. a little  
longer line.

Both Generals Byng and Reed were  
out when I returned to Corps Head-  
quarters and I was unable to learn  
their views on these points.

A point connected with the water  
supply in the sections visited I  
communicated to Colonel KEARNS, at  
9th Corps H.Q. who is going to take  
action.

9. Brig.General Reed told me he now  
places greatest reliance on the Mounted  
Division, and that he fears the 29th  
Division is becoming jumpy. The 11th  
Division he believes have improved  
greatly during the last month, but  
their shortage of officers gives  
General Fanshawe much anxiety.

10. The line has been divided into 4  
Sections instead of 5.

Mounted Division remains as  
before.

13th Division moving to their  
right, hold the two subsections  
of the 10th Division and  
their own original right  
subsection.

29th Division have taken over  
the left subsection of the  
13th Division.

11th Division have taken a  
portion of 29th Division left.

One Brigade 53rd Division has  
been attached to 29th Divn.

(SGD) E.C.ANSTEY, Captain G.S.

1.10.15.



"O".

I visited A & N.Z. Army Corps Headquarters today.

General Birdwood had no particular points to bring to notice.

C.G.S.

This question is being taken up with Col. Sykes.

*init?* C.F.A.

2. The G.S. and B.G.R.A. complained of the delay in receiving Aeroplane Reports. They pointed out that this morning (4th), a report having been received from their observers of considerable hostile movement towards their left flank, the report of an aeroplane reconnaissance which passed over ANZAC at 9 am. was awaited with unusual interest, but had not been received by 5 pm. According to the present custom the report would probably not be received until tomorrow morning (5th) when, of course, it would be too late to be of much value.

bring this forward.

x

3. It is evident that co-ordination between the artillery Commanders of the ANZAC and SUVLA areas is needed. They should be able to assist one another considerably. But they are evidently not working happily together, from the want of superior control.

May I suggest that this should be one of the first points towards which the new B.G.R.A., G.H.Q. should, on arrival, direct his attention.

I should like to have this soon.

x

4. With reference to the 9.2 Hows, Lieut-Colonel Nichol's report was somewhat misleading as regards the positions at ANZAC. General Birdwood suggests putting one in Shrapnel Gully, and the other in the left section. This would widen their field of action considerably. I will put up this question separately.

(SGD) E.C. ANSTEY, Capt. G.S.

"O" (a) 4.10.15.

*\* Note  
These two notes init? WB. (Cgs).*



364.  
"O".

I visited HELLES today arriving there 10.30.  
A Conference was being held at the Headquarters  
8th Corps.

I visited Brigadier General Clayton-Browne  
Commanding the South Eastern Yeomanry Brigade.  
The officers and a percentage of N.C.Os of his  
Brigade were going into the trenches in batches  
for instruction. I visited the Headquarters of  
the 127th Inf. Brigade and accompanied Brig. Gen.  
Aliott round a part of his first line of trenches,  
particularly in the neighbourhood of FUSILIER BLUFF.  
The enemy here have been bombing a good deal lately -  
Our bombing post there was not very well protected -  
a R.E. Officer who was with us had this in hand, and  
was preparing to put up a thick traverse, additional  
wire screens and to throw out wire entanglement to  
prevent the post being rushed. General Aliott told  
me a good many men were suffering from veldt sores,  
and I met several men with hands and arms bandaged.

(SGD) H.W.M. WATSON, Major.

12th October 1915.



"O"

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C.G.S.  
Major  
Watson's  
report for  
information.

C.F.Aspinall.

I visited Anzac on Sunday 10th October and went to the N.Z. and Australian Divl. Headquarters. General Godley had no particular points to bring to notice, but informed me that a report had reached him from the 29th Indian Infantry Brigade that the Turks had used or experimented with asphyxiating gas. I went to the G.O.C. 29th Indian Inf. Bgde, who passed me on to the point where this was alleged to have occurred. It was in front of the line held by the 1/6 Gurkhas. At this point I found there was a gap at I.6, between contours 40 and 50, and work was proceeding to join up by sapping. A communication trench running to the N. end of the gap was made dead straight, and untraversed, and could apparently be enfiladed successfully by the enemy.

C.G.S.

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Anzac  
mentioned an  
"unconfirmed  
report" to  
the effect that  
gas had been  
used.

Lt.Col.Aspinall.

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Have we had  
any report  
from 9th  
Corps regard-  
ing this ?

please speak.

The enemy were 80 to 100x from our line here and were believed by the O.C. 1/6 Gurkhas to be working on a sunken road 20 yards or so nearer to us. He was hoping with the help of the artillery to catch them at work and get a machine gun on to them, before they got down too far into the ground.

At the same point I had a conversation with the officer who had seen the gas (Captain G attached to the 1/6 Gurkhas) At 1845 on the previous evening (9th) this officer was busy superintending the work above mentioned when he smelt gas, and found several of his men coughing and with their eyes watering. He saw a cloud between his line and the Turks, extending for about 40 yards. This hung in the air for about seven minutes and came towards his line, when the wind came from his rear and blew it back and dispersed it. Captain G had had experience of gas in France and expressed himself as certain that what he had seen was some kind of experiment with asphyxiating gas. No bombs were thrown at the time. A certain amount of enemy shelling occurred very close while I was at this point - about 1530.

I passed along the rear of the Mounted Division, and on to CHOCOLATE HILL, where I saw the G.O.C. 38th Inf. Bde. who had no points to bring to notice. A few shells fell on the rear slopes of CHOCOLATE HILL as I left it (H.E.).

Owing to misdirection I cut across part of the Salt Lake which was very wet and clinging and only just negotiable.

I met the G.O.C. 53rd Division and arrived at the Headquarters of the 13th Division at about 1815, where I stayed the night. Neither commander had any particular point to mention. I reached



the Headquarters of the 29th Division at 9 a.m. and went with Colonel Fuller into the front line trenches (88th Brigade). The front line trenches had recently been pushed forward 100 yds. and a good deal of work was going on. Thence to JEFFERSON'S POST via LONE TREE GULLY. Unfortunately a storm of rain came on, and it was impossible to see much from J's Post. The line of trenches up the hill side seemed full of dangerous points, but I only saw one notice at one particular spot. At J's Post itself the enemy in front of it were reported to have been extraordinarily inactive during the last few days. They had been blasting a certain amount.

I returned to G.H.Q. by the Torpedo Boat.

(SGD) H.W.M. WATSON, Major.

X date. ?

*init WB.*  
*12/10*



"O".

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I visited Suvla today, arrived late (1245) owing to rough weather, saw G.O.C. 9th Corps. Informed by General Reed that the enemy had been shelling more than usual during last two days - particularly on ridge N. of 9th Corps H.Qrs. where one shell had come as heretofore three were coming in quick succession. I visited G.O.C. 11th Division - ~~He~~ mentioned that the enemy had been using a certain quantity of 5.9 shrapnel - more than usual during last two days. He had himself picked up two new fuses.

He pointed out, as is no doubt well known, that five Battalions in his Division were commanded by temporary captains, who had never soldiered before August 1914 - I returned on the trawler with a pilot and observer whose machine had come down yesterday on the Salt Lake, owing to the control jamming. They had the wireless installation with them and hoped to get the engine away later, but the enemy had spent about 300 shells on the machine beginning almost directly she came down.

(SGD) H.W.M. WATSON, Major.



"O".

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Yesterday, 15th October, I visited Helles saw the G.O.C. 8th Corps, and went to the extreme right of the British Line, held by the Border Regiment. 500 yards had just been taken over from the French - High thin parapets with a number of iron loopholes generally badly placed. The men were working hard to make fire platforms, and subsequently lower ~~and~~ thicken parapets. Went along the fire trenches as far as the Krithia Nullah.

Major Watson.  
Please speak,  
C.F.A.

Attention of  
Brigadier was  
drawn to this.  
G.P.D.

Today 7.45 a.m. reached Hd. Quarters of the G.O.C. 126th Brigade - 1/4 E. Lancashires had been attached to 127th Brigade. Remaining 3 Battalions made into 2, 1/9th Manchesters being split up. Went with G.O.C. 126th Bgde. to INNISKILLING INCH - Sapping out was going on without much shooting from the enemy. The Brigadier was trying to select machine gun sites to cover the ground in front of BORDER BARRICADE - Very difficult to get a field of fire without shooting into our own trenches - this is owing to saps not going far enough out, before starting the T's.

Went down the firing line as far as KRITHIA Nullah. Large working party on the crater at BIRDCAGE EAST - A fair number of rifle grenades were being fired here by the enemy - A Turk who had surrendered, voluntarily went to this point, and talked to two Turkish sentries across the intervening 7 yards, and gave them a day's rations. Visited G.O.C. 52nd Division. Everywhere there were reports of increased number of enemy shells during last few days.

(SGD( H.W.M. WATSON, Major.

16th October '15.



SECRET.

D332

From:- SIR IAN HAMILTON.

To:- TROOPERS, LONDON.

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M.F. 763.

12.10.15.

Despd. 2110.

Following for Prime Minister:- Quote  
"Personal and Private. AAA Very grateful for  
sympathetic message AAA What we really want are  
reinforcements to let the men have more rest and liberal  
canteen supplies to give them change of diet and War  
Office are doing what they can for us in these respects  
AAA Some signs of improvement since I wrote.  
Ian Hamilton." Unquote.



15333

SECRET.

From. War Office.

To. Sir Ian Hamilton.

8725 Cipher.

11/10/15.

Despatched 1750.  
Received 0800.

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Following from Prime Minister:- Quote  
"Personal and private. Thanks for your letter of 30th.  
I am distressed by the prevalence which you report of  
sickness in your force. Can you suggest anything  
that we can do from here which will improve your  
conditions in this respect" Unquote.



5734  
Z.24.

S E C R E T.

To:- TROOPERS, LONDON.

From:- G.H.Q., MEDFORCE.

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M.F.Q.T. 3194.

6th October.

AAA

Practically all are now supplied with warm  
clothing AAA Supply well in hand.

PLEASE ENCIPHER AND DESPATCH.



5746

S E C R E T.

From LORD KITCHENER.

To GENERAL MONRO.

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29th October.

Desp. 1215.  
Recd. 1815.

9297 Cipher.

I hope you will send me as soon as possible your report about main issue at DARDANELLES, ~~via.~~ <sup>viz.</sup> staying or leaving. Of course, the general situation in the East if Turks now held at GALLIPOLI were free will be considered, as well as likelihood of Germans getting through transit to CONSTANTINOPLE, which seems almost inevitable.

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5145  
SECRET.

PRIORITY.

From:- GENERAL SIR CHARLES MONRO.

To:- LORD KITCHENER.

M.F.800.

31/10/15.

Despd. 1945.

After an inspection of the Gallipoli Peninsula I have arrived at the following conclusions. The troops on the Peninsula with the exception of the Australian & New Zealand Corps are not equal to a sustained effort owing to the inexperience of the officers, the want of training of the men and the depleted condition of many of the units. We merely hold the fringe of the shores and are confronted by the Turks in very formidable entrenchments with all the advantages of position and power of observation of our movements. The beaches are exposed to observed artillery fire and in the restricted area all stores are equally exposed. Action by surprise can no longer be counted on as the Turks are in considerably stronger force than they were and have had ample time to provide against surprise landings. Since the flanks of the Turks cannot be attacked only a frontal attack is possible and no room is afforded on any of the beaches for the distribution of additional divisions should they be sent nor is there sufficient space for the deployment of an adequate force of artillery the action of which would be impaired by poverty of observation and of good positions for searching or counter-battery effect. Naval guns could only assist to a partial degree. In fact an attack could only be prosecuted under the disadvantages of the serious lack of depth and of absence of power of surprise seeing that the Turkish position dominates our line throughout. The uncertainty of the weather might also seriously hinder the landing of reinforcements and regularity in providing the artillery ammunition to the amount which might be required. I am therefore of opinion that another attempt to carry the Turkish lines would not offer any hope of success. The Turkish positions are being actively strengthened daily. Our information leads to the belief that heavy guns and ammunition are being sent to the Peninsula from Constantinople. Consequently by the time fresh divisions if available could arrive the task of breaking the Turkish line would be considerably more formidable than even it is at present. On purely military grounds therefore in consequence of the grave daily wastage of officers and men which occurs and owing to the lack of prospect of being able to drive the Turks from their entrenched lines, I recommend the evacuation of the Peninsula. As to the estimate of loss which would be involved I am not at present able to make a definite statement. So much would depend on the degree to which the Turks attacked us during our withdrawal, or how far the re-embarkation could be conducted unobserved, and on the weather conditions which prevailed at the time.

Admiral



Admiral de Robeck has been asked to give me an estimate but does not feel able to make at present a precise statement. I have no information as to the influence on the situation which would be caused by complete German communication with Constantinople. We are told that the Germans have taken over the Turkish submarine and air services and that Turkish machine-guns and artillery are being manned by German experts. It would appear certain that even if no German troops are sent to this theatre, ammunition and materials of war will be despatched in quantities which will add greatly to our present difficulties. I have endeavoured in the expression of my opinion to give full weight to the effect which will be created in the East by our evacuation and I consider that the force now on the Peninsula or such portions of it as we may be able to evacuate would be more favourably placed in EGYPT. AAA This force before it can be usefully employed stands much in need of rest, reorganization and especially of training. The Corps and Divisional Commanders have done splendid work in the Peninsula but they do not possess the opportunity or time, as they now stand, to create this force into a reliable fighting machine. Hence I think that loss of prestige caused by withdrawal would be compensated for in a few months by increased efficiency. I propose leaving here to visit Maxwell in Egypt on Tuesday and will report further on the situation in the near East after consultation with him. I shall then proceed to SALONIKA.

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