

## CHAPTER VII

### MAY 29<sup>TH</sup>—THE TURKS BREAK INTO QUINN'S

DURING the week following the crushing defeat of the Turkish attack of May 19th there had existed along the whole Anzac front a stillness never previously experienced. The rifle-shooting by day decreased to a few shots every minute. The spirit of the enemy seemed to have faded away. At the same time he could not fail to appreciate the opportunity which still existed at the head of Monash Valley. A slight success at that place might go far towards ensuring the very result for which on May 19th he had fruitlessly lost 10,000 men. His appreciation of the position in that valley was shown by the fact that on May 21st he endeavoured to place two guns at the head of its western branch, immediately above The Nek.<sup>1</sup> Their crews were detected at work around them, apparently preparing to sweep the gully. Phillips's and Caddy's batteries at once blew one field-piece into the air, the Turks withdrawing the other. Next day, when they tried to replace it, Phillips knocked over the second gun, and the attempt was never repeated. But the ordinary sniping with rifles down the valley presently recurred, and became far more active than ever before. There is no doubt that during the armistice of May 24th the higher Turkish staff, surveying from Baby 700 the whole Anzac area, was impressed with the extraordinary opportunity which the position at Quinn's afforded them. Turkish burial parties, standing in front of that post, had looked over the Australian trenches straight down the slope in rear.<sup>2</sup> The sentries, stationed by agreement along the centre of No-Man's Land, stood all day on the edge of the Bloody Angle and The Nek, taking in a full view of all that passed up and down Monash Valley. The deductions from what could there be seen were obvious. On the following day the enemy was found to have established himself more firmly on Dead Man's Ridge; twenty-four hours later, on May 26th, his snipers opened from a new trench at the

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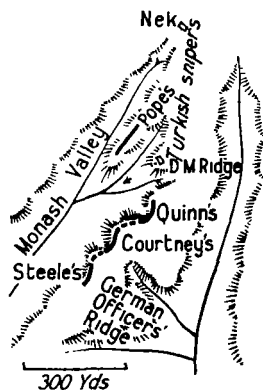
<sup>1</sup> The Turks had previously used this position as an observation-post.

<sup>2</sup> According to the statement of a Turk subsequently captured, Mustafa Kemal that day worked as sergeant with one of the burial parties.

head of the valley near The Nek. So heavy and accurate was the sharp-shooting early that morning that some fifty men in the valley near Pope's were hit. Phillips's guns and the mountain-battery in the Australian area were turned upon the trench, and by 11 o'clock the fire was suppressed.<sup>3</sup>

But, unknown to most of the Anzac garrison, the enemy was already aiming against this most vulnerable angle a blow far more difficult to parry. Ever since the 15th Battalion's sortie on May 9th, some of those who took part were certain that the Turks were mining towards Quinn's, and the news that a mine-tunnel had during that night been discovered opposite the right of the post was reported to headquarters.<sup>4</sup> The New Zealand engineers were already taking counter-measures by sinking in the front trench three holes or shafts, twelve or fifteen feet deep, in which they maintained men listening for any sounds of Turkish mining. These measures seem to have been considered by the authorities a sufficient precaution for the time being.

But the men of the 15th and 16th Battalions, which in turn garrisoned Quinn's, included a large proportion of miners—those of the 15th from Mount Morgan, Charters Towers, and other fields in Queensland, and from the Tasmanian tin mines; those of the 16th from the goldfields and other mines of Western and South Australia. These big, staunch fellows, though genial and often humorous, were hard-grained men, accustomed to form their own opinions, and not afraid to express them. Those of the 15th had not forgotten the positive reports of their own men on May 9th. With their special knowledge they perceived how easily and quickly the enemy could undermine Quinn's, driving from the farther



<sup>3</sup>On the previous day the 6-inch howitzer in Shrapnel Gully had similarly fired at the trench upon Dead Man's Ridge. But at that short range the impact was insufficient to explode most of the shells.

<sup>4</sup>It is to be noted that the Turkish General Staff gives the date of commencement of mining as "after the attack of May 11." Probably May 9-10 is meant. But the Turkish records are often inaccurate, and the report of those who saw the tunnel or tunnels is fairly definite.

side of the ridge deep tunnels by which he could presently blow the whole post into the air. In spite of the confidence of the authorities, some of these men took their own precautions. So it was that on May 17th a man of the 15th, by name Slack, who was "listening" for his own part by lying on the floor of a small forward sap in the sub-section next to his own, near the right centre of Quinn's, distinctly heard the steady, persistent, muffled knocking of the enemy's picks. The sound was faint, but definite. Slack summoned his company sergeant-major, Williams,<sup>5</sup> and the company commander, Sampson. Both heard the sound, and it was duly reported.

Little notice, however, was taken of this by the authorities, who probably mistrusted the information. It was not generally realised at this stage of the war that the military engineer, while skilled in the general application of engineering to warfare, was necessarily a novice in the technique of some special branches, including that of mining. The leaders of the New Zealand Engineers were mainly officers of the Royal Engineers, highly trained and gallant men, but the miners of the 15th were not in the least deflected from their own opinions by those of any other authority. During the night of May 17th a large proportion of Sampson's company individually visited the sap from which mining could be heard, and their verdict, expressed in their own words, was: "Jacko"—*i.e.*, the Turk—"is getting under us."

The Turkish attack of May 19th gave even the miners something else to think of. The intention of the enemy had actually been to explode this mine on May 19th as a prelude to that assault. But he was without skilled miners or suitable tools, and his tunnels were consequently still incomplete. Meanwhile, so far as the surface works were concerned, Quinn's had been considerably strengthened. Soon after taking command in the valley, Colonel Chauvel of the 1st Light Horse Brigade had reorganised its defences. In view of the precarious nature of the posts, and the need for getting continuous work carried out on them, he had appointed for each position a permanent commander, together with a staff which would not be changed at every relief. The

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<sup>5</sup> C.S.M. T. Williams (No. 553, 15th Bn.). Labourer; of Brisbane; b Cork, Ireland 1878. Died of wounds, 12 Aug., 1915.

staffs in question were thus composed: At Pope's (where the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Light Horse Regiments followed each other in weekly reliefs),

Commandant—Lieutenant-Colonel Rowell,<sup>a</sup> 3rd Light Horse Regiment;

Second-in-Command—Major Glasgow, 2nd Light Horse Regiment;

Adjutant—Lieutenant Nettleton,<sup>7</sup> 1st Light Horse Regiment;

at Courtney's (held continuously by the 14th Battalion), the commander and staff of the battalion; at Quinn's (where the 15th and 16th Battalions relieved one another every forty-eight hours),

Commandant—Lieutenant-Colonel Cannan, 15th Battalion (appointed on account of his knowledge of the post);

Second-in-Command—Major Tilney, 16th Battalion;

Adjutant—Lieutenant McSharry,<sup>8</sup> 2nd Light Horse Regiment.

In order to complete the numbers necessary for the garrison of Quinn's, a detachment of the 13th Battalion was usually added; and on May 20th, in consequence of a suggestion from Godley, since Quinn's Post was "more trying than any other," the 13th was placed on the regular roster for the post.

The chief object of this reorganisation was to ensure continuous trench-improvement. At Quinn's an ordered scheme of work was now drawn up. Six New Zealand engineers<sup>9</sup> superintended the infantry working in the six sub-sections, while McSharry, the post-adjutant, acted as works' officer. They were hampered by lack of wood and iron, of which little had reached Anzac—and even this, largely through ignorance of the needs of the front line, was sometimes used unduly for offices or quarters of various staffs near the beach. Thus in No. 3 Subsection of Quinn's, the apex of which was

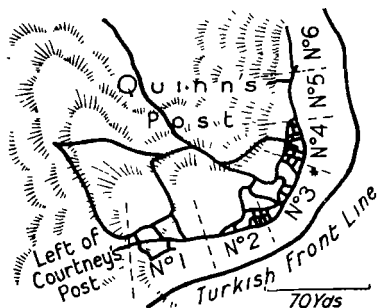
<sup>a</sup> Lieut.-Col. F. M. Rowell. Commanded 3rd L.H. Regt. 1914/15. Civil servant; of Lockley's, S. Aust.; b. Lockley's, 5 Apr., 1876. Died of illness, 8 Aug., 1915.

<sup>7</sup> Lieut. B. P. Nettleton; 1st L.H. Regt. Merchant; of Sydney; b. Sydney, 15 March, 1889. Killed in action, 7 Aug., 1915.

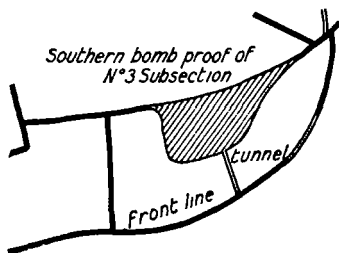
<sup>8</sup> Lieut.-Col. T. P. McSharry, C.M.G., D.S.O., M.C. Commanded 15th Bn. 1916/18. Surveyor; of Brisbane; b. Reid River, Townsville, Q'land, 9 Aug., 1884. Died of wounds, 6 Aug., 1918.

<sup>9</sup> These were under Sgt. C. H. W. Thom (of Brisbane).

now but fifteen yards from the Turkish trenches, the enemy's bombs not only fell in the front line, but rolled down the rear slope into the two short, deep support trenches of that subsection, close behind the apex. Three out of every four of the men in the support trenches were supposed to be sleeping, the remainder being on guard to rouse them in case of assault, so that they could reinforce the front. Since



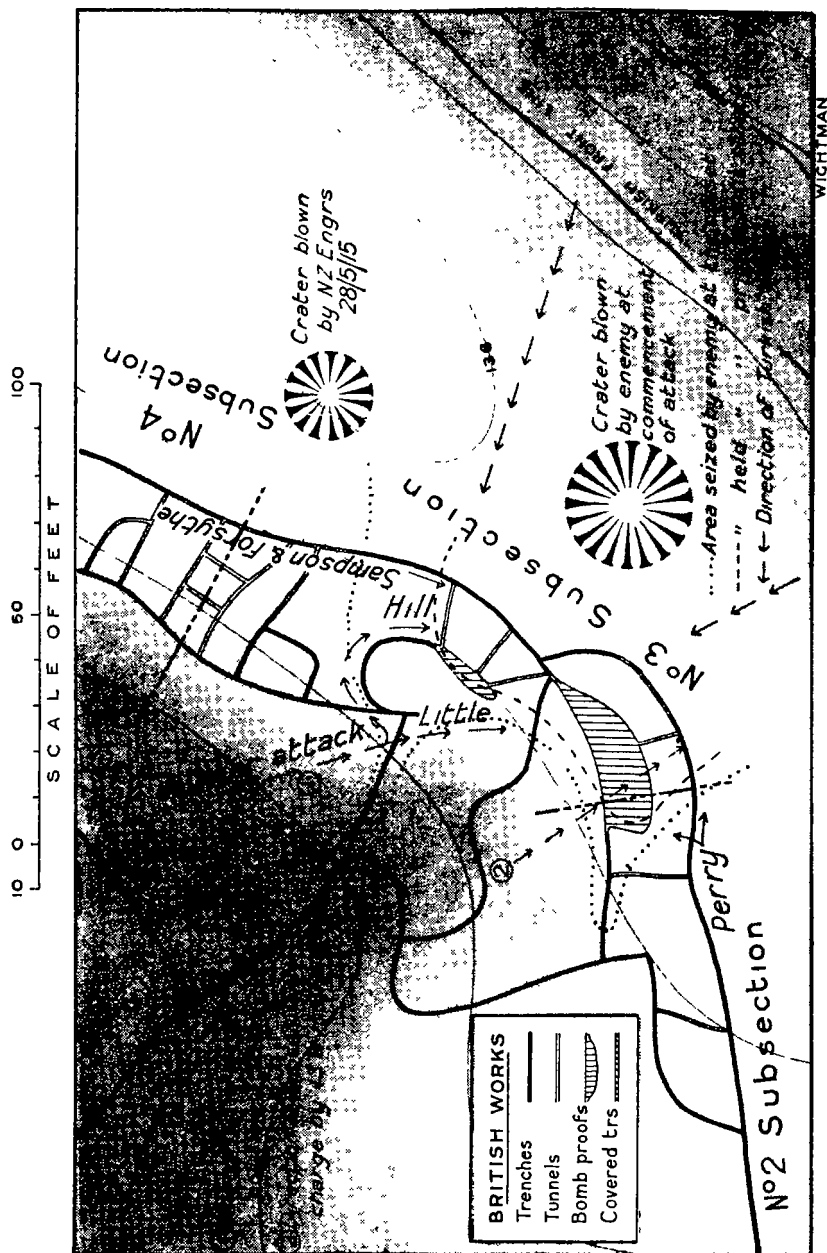
men who should have been resting were thus being wounded and killed, it was decided to roof the southernmost support trench and enlarge it to form a covered chamber, in which the men could lie without fear of bombs. Wood and iron being practically unobtainable through the recognised channels, fifty men under an officer were sent at dead of night to Captain Littler, who was in charge of the beach parties, and of whom that particular officer had formerly been a ship-mate. The party returned to Quinn's carrying thirty-six sheets of galvanised iron and some heavy timber. With this the support trench was forthwith roofed, the iron being then covered with two feet of earth. The trench had been widened, and now formed a "bomb-proof" chamber, capable of holding fifty men. That they might reach the front line quickly in case of alarm, three short exits were left, one opening into the front line and the others to communication



trenches. When once the chamber had been finished, it was possible for the front trench of this dangerous sector to be lightly held—say, by an officer and half-a-dozen men—the remainder resting in safety in the bomb-proof ready to reinforce instantly if required. The northern support trench



Map No. 7

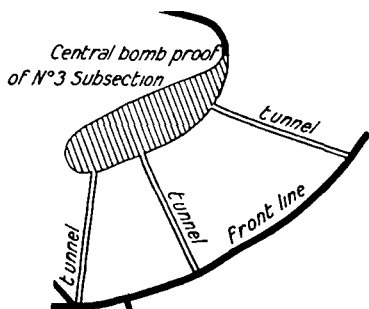


THE CENTRAL SUB-SECTIONS OF QUINN'S POST AT THE TIME OF THE TURKISH ATTACK OF 29TH MAY, 1915

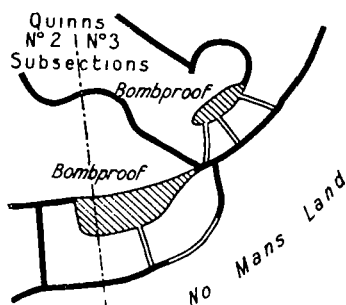
British troops and trenches, red; Turkish, blue. Height contours, 2 metres

of the sector, which was only slightly less dangerous, was similarly covered, and connected with the firing line by three short tunnels. The two bomb-proofs, almost adjoining one another at the point where the Australian trenches ran closest to those of the enemy, considerably strengthened the position.

Meanwhile the private opinion of the miner-infantry concerning the underground defences of the post remained unchanged. Some of them were convinced that they could hear the Turkish picks undermining their position. This is the apprehension which has most power to demoralise a garrison in stationary warfare—as strong perhaps as, in battle, that of being subjected to their own shell-fire. When the suspicion becomes a certainty, the strain tends to be unbearable. The certainty of the enemy's



tunnelling, however, was as yet realised by few of the troops, the engineer officers did not believe it, and Slack and his comrades were of metal too tough to let their knowledge affect their nerves. Nor were they to be put off by official scepticism. Slack (known to his mates as "Old Ganger")<sup>10</sup> daily dogged his company commander,



prophesying the destruction of Quinn's unless his warnings were heeded. When on May 23rd his battalion returned to the post, the picking first faintly heard by him could now be detected at three points. Next day, during the armistice, many in that neighbourhood caught the muffled

<sup>10</sup> Cpl. J. Slack, M.M. (No. 654, 15th Bn.). Railway ganger; b. Wellington, N.S.W., 1870. (He was a tall, sinewy fellow, older than most, with the humorous, kindly wrinkles of the typical miner, and had constantly refused promotion in the A.I.F. He had mined all over Australia, and of late had managed a small Tasmanian tin "show.")



sounds; but it was not until the early morning of May 25th that the listener in the engineers' gallery in No. 3 Subsection reported that he could hear the enemy mining.

Vigorous steps were then taken in haste; the chief engineer of the division hurried to the spot; the listener in his tiny gallery put in an auger. The Turkish picks immediately ceased. Five experienced miners, being consulted, said that the sounds came from within a few feet and immediately below the listening-gallery. The obvious counter-measure was to blow in the Turkish tunnel by firing a *camouflet*, that is, a countermine not sufficiently powerful to break the surface but powerful enough to crush the enemy tunnel. A light charge was accordingly put into the nearest listening-gallery. It was then securely backed with sandbags or "tamped." At 5.30 p.m., after much consideration, the mine was at length fired, the garrison being withdrawn from its neighbourhood, while the 15th Battalion, which had just been relieved, was sent back to man the rear slope in case the Turks attacked. The surface was not broken by the explosion. Several yards of trench were shaken in, and it was judged that the head of the Turkish tunnel had been destroyed.

Mining was now undertaken on a very different scale. Over and above the three small listening-holes, five offensive tunnels were begun, which would serve as listening-galleries also. Miners were called for from the 4th Infantry and 1st Light Horse Brigades, and some forty or fifty—among them "Old Ganger" Slack—were immediately set to work. The earth was at first carried back in sandbags through the already congested trenches of the post. This inconvenience was presently avoided by driving a large tunnel into the hillside in rear of the crest and twenty feet below it. The tunnel served as an approach, and the subterranean galleries were then extended from it.

But by this time the enemy's mining had proceeded so far that it was an almost superhuman task to forestall him. No sooner had the new galleries been begun than, early on May 27th, the Turks were again heard at work directly beneath one of them. As far as could be judged, their miners were then actually engaged in tamping a mine preparatory to exploding it. A second countermine was hurriedly prepared,

containing 15 lb. of gun-cotton. The 15th Battalion was again brought up, and the mine was fired at 10 a.m. It was reported that cries were heard after the explosion, and this countermine also was therefore judged to have been successful. At midnight, however, picking was again heard, this time in two places. Two of the new galleries nearest to the sounds were accordingly charged. The 15th Battalion was for a third time brought up, and at 2.30 a.m. on May 28th one of the mines was exploded. By an oversight the 15th was left waiting on the hillside during the rest of the night, although the other mine was not fired. Two more galleries were begun during the day. About 6 p.m. a tapping was again heard, and when "Old Ganger" Slack came off duty with the rest of his shift, he called in at the headquarters of his company, on the hillside near the fork of Monash Valley, and told the three young officers that the countermining had been too late. The blowing up of Quinn's Post, he said, was now only a matter of hours.

That night Quinn's was garrisoned by 350 men of the 13th Battalion together with 100 of the 10th Light Horse. Colonel Cannan, the permanent commandant of the post, had been invited by Sir Ian Hamilton to the G.H.Q. ship *Arcadian* for two days' rest,<sup>11</sup> and in his absence Colonel Burnage of the 13th had charge. Burnage had taken with him Lieutenant Marks as his adjutant, but Lieutenant McSharry, the permanent adjutant, also remained on the post. The local reserve was the 15th Battalion, bivouacked on the hillside near the fork of Monash Valley, the nearest company being opposite the fork, and the others farther away on either side of the valley. The remaining reserves were—first, the 16th Battalion, local reserve to Pope's and now organised in two companies;<sup>12</sup> second, the remaining company of the 13th Battalion, bivouacked farther down Monash Valley; finally, the 1st and 3rd Light Horse Regiments and part of the 10th.

<sup>11</sup> Col. Monash also had been given two days' rest at G.H.Q., but had just returned.

<sup>12</sup> The strength of the 4th Inf. Bde. at this date was:

H.Q.	..	..	..	..	40
13th Bn.	..	..	..	..	679
14th Bn.	..	..	..	..	661
15th Bn.	..	..	..	..	502
16th Bn.	..	..	..	..	411

2,293

This last had been detached from the 3rd Light Horse Brigade on Russell's Top, and provided 100 men each for Quinn's and Pope's, the remainder being camped in Monash Valley.

The night had almost passed when, at 3.20 a.m., some of the nearer companies of reserve troops sleeping in Monash Valley were waked (as one of them afterwards wrote) "by a series of loud and heavy explosions which shook the valley. Immediately cries and yells came from the direction of Quinn's Post, to be drowned almost at once by a tornado of rifle-fire and salvoes of shrapnel bursting overhead." The company commanders of the 15th, obtaining their orders from Major Carter, its acting commander, hurried their companies, each as soon as it was assembled,<sup>13</sup> up the path towards Quinn's. A messenger from Chauvel had already reached Carter with the verbal message that Quinn's had been blown up, that the Turks were in it, and that the 15th was to turn them out. The leading company doubled up the gully, through the enemy's shrapnel, under scattered rifle-fire from the Bloody Angle, and so up the steep path, past a few sheltering stragglers and frightened men—an incident inseparable from any such fight. At the junction of the two main communication trenches, near the headquarters of the post, were standing Colonel Burnage and his adjutant, Marks. Above them on the hillside were men all looking towards the skyline, which was hazy with the dust of bursting bombs. The second company of the 15th came up a few minutes later, the rest of the battalion following. Shortly after it there moved one of the two companies of the 16th, under Major Mansbridge,<sup>14</sup> who had been directed by Chauvel to proceed a short distance up the Bloody Angle by way of a demonstration, in order to counter a reported attempt of the enemy to creep round that flank of Quinn's. The other, under Major Margolin, moved to the slope behind Quinn's, up which also hastened the reserve portion of the 13th under Major Durrant.

<sup>13</sup> The men of course slept with their boots on, and companies could be turned out with extraordinary rapidity.

<sup>14</sup> Lieut.-Col. W. O. Mansbridge, D.S.O. Commanded 44th Bn. 1916/17. Civil servant; of Coolgardie district, W. Aust.; b. Chester, Eng., 13 Jan., 1872.

There was thus quickly brought to the slope in rear of Quinn's a very strong body of reserves. As these arrived, the situation appeared to them to be the most critical that had occurred at Anzac since the evening of April 25th. When the second company of the 15th neared the post, it saw the company which had preceded it climbing the hill on its right, and to all appearance getting immediately into heavy fighting. One of the leading officers, Lieutenant Leitch,<sup>18</sup> was already coming down the slope, his wrist almost shot away. Wounded were streaming past, among them, on a stretcher, Colonel Burnage himself.

What had happened was this. Although some of the countermines fired by the engineers had been successful, killing and wounding a number of Turkish tunnellers, nevertheless the enemy resumed work upon the head of one gallery which the engineers thought they had destroyed on May 27th, and by the following night this mine was judged ready for firing. The 5th Turkish Division, which had suffered great loss upon May 19th, was still holding the position, and its 14th Regiment was to follow up the explosion by seizing Quinn's. Apparently one battalion armed with bombs was to make the assault, a second battalion supporting it if successful. The attack was to be delivered under cover of heavy rifle and machine-gun fire from the flanks, and assisted by a feint upon Russell's Top. The Turkish guns were also to open a sharp fire.

At 3.20 many of the 13th Battalion holding Quinn's were flung to the ground by a heavy buffet. The earth rocked. There was a muffled roar. For a moment a harsh red light glowed overhead from the brilliantly-lit underside of a low cloud. Through this glare black masses flew skyward. Darkness instantly followed. Presently earth and débris began to fall from the sky, half-burying men, so that they had to struggle to free their limbs. The mine had exploded close outside the parapet of No. 3 Subsection, and the whole garrison of that part of the front trench, as well as the miners in the neighbouring tunnel, were buried and killed. The front trench and parts of the communication trenches were almost

<sup>18</sup> Lieut. A. E. G. Leitch; 15th Bn. School teacher; b. South Melbourne, Vic., 1873.

filled by the breaking down of their walls and the shower of débris. Amid a wild fire of shrapnel, rifles, and machine-guns, Turkish bombs began to burst in such showers as had never before been seen at Anzac. The supports in the bomb-proofs of No. 3 in the immediate neighbourhood of the explosion came out of their shelters dazed, some tumbling out to the flanks, others to the rear.

In that most terrifying of all predicaments in which a soldier can find himself, the garrison of the front line on either flank of the destroyed sector stood unflinching. But, following the explosion, a party of the enemy entered the practically empty No. 3 Subsection. The moon was at the full, and from Pope's the attacking Turks could be clearly seen walking across No-Man's Land. One tall man (who could easily have been shot from Pope's but for the fear that he might possibly be an Australian) stood coolly lighting his bombs and throwing them into the trench. Then the enemy leapt into Quinn's. The first thing that some of the stunned Australians on the flank of the explosion heard, on coming to themselves, was the sound of gruff voices close to them speaking in an unknown language.

Entering the post on either side of the mine-crater, the enemy pushed forward at once into the bomb-proofs. The darkness of these was intense; but, feeling their way through them, Turks presently began to emerge into the communication trenches leading downhill towards the rear of the post. From the northern bomb-proof they came along the trench leading to the post-headquarters; and from the southern, along that which ran out to the rear of No. 2 Subsection.

The garrison of No. 2 was that day in charge of Lieutenant Fletcher,<sup>16</sup> a newly-commissioned officer of the 13th; No. 1—the section next to Courtney's—was under Lieutenant Perry.<sup>17</sup> Amid the flashes of bombs, momentarily lighting the curtain of acrid smoke; amid the dust, confusion, and noise resembling that caused by the crashing floors in some great city conflagration; Fletcher and his men

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<sup>16</sup> Capt. B. G. W. Fletcher; 13th Bn. Clerk; of Mosman, N.S.W.; b. Kingston, N.S.W., 6 Aug., 1890. Killed in action, 11 Apr., 1917.

<sup>17</sup> Lieut.-Col. S. L. Perry D.S.O., M.C. Commanded 48th Bn. 1918/19; b. Sydney, 23 Aug., 1890.

observed that the Turks were penetrating the post on their left and getting behind them. Some of the men clambered into the open above the support trench, and from there began shooting in the direction of the invaders. Farther south Perry—who kept a very cool head—perceived that the garrison was standing entirely firm, shooting at point-blank range, and realised that the enemy could not hope to penetrate, except at the point where a number of the defenders had been killed by the explosion. He therefore went towards the sector which the Turks had entered, and, establishing himself at a trench junction which afforded a good view of the rear, at once ascertained that the enemy was in the southern bomb-proof. He thereupon called to the supports, who had come out of the bomb-proof, to watch the exit which led from it into the nearest communication trench. No sooner had he done so than the Turks began to come out. Their leader was immediately shot, and the remainder jumped back into the chamber and from within fired furiously through the exit. The southern bomb-proof, as has been described, had three exits—one to the front line, and two to communication trenches. One of the latter had now been barred to the enemy, and, as Perry could tell by the continuous rifle-fire at the other end of the post that the Australians there were holding their own, he instantly determined to turn the tables on the assaulting Turks by cutting off their retreat. Leading a few of his men along the front line, of which the sides had in places fallen in, he set them behind a heap of this earth to watch the main exit from the bomb-proof. This would make it impossible for the enemy, when he saw that he was beaten, to escape to his own lines. Perry himself was cut off from communication with any one north of him, since the Turks intervened. But he had little anxiety, being able to draw his ammunition through the next post to the south, Courtney's, and to send messages by the same route to headquarters.

Thus, on the southern flank, the Turks were from the first securely held. To the north, by shooting along the front line from the point of entry, they killed any men of its garrison who were exposed to them. But the trench here also had been half-blocked by the explosion; and behind the tumbled earth at one of its bends the Australians were firmly

established. Thus the northern half of the garrison, under Forsythe of the 13th, though also temporarily cut off from communication, was holding its own with confidence.

The way, however, was open to the enemy to advance from the centre of the post down the communication trenches into Monash Valley. As has already been explained,<sup>18</sup> the headquarters of Quinn's was on the slope immediately in rear of the trenches. The track to the position, climbing to near the top of the steep runnel in which the post was situated, forked like the letter "Y,"<sup>19</sup> the left branch ascending to No. 4 Subsection, some forty yards above, and the right to No. 3, which was at about the same distance. The latter branch led to the bomb-proofs. At the fork, where in normal times messengers from either flank could swiftly reach it, was headquarters.

On this morning Lieutenant McSharry, the permanent adjutant, who had been awakened twenty minutes before time by his batman, had been sitting on the bank of the main track when the heavy bump of the explosion either threw him or caused him to jump down on to the pathway. Though the subsequent shower of falling earth had buried him to the knees, he had struggled free, when he observed the fuses of the enemy's bombs flying continuously over the sky-line.

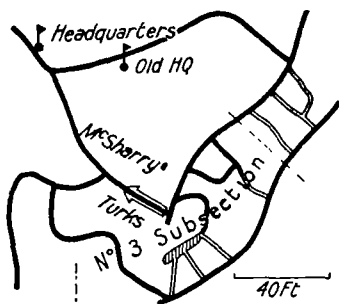
The staff of the post had always expected that, by a mine or other means, the Turks would some day force their way into Quinn's, and had often discussed the best means of ousting them. McSharry had determined on his own action. He went straight to the bomb-store—a dugout in the left branch of the communication trench. On his way he saw some of the men from No. 3 tumbling out of the support trench. "Come on, Australia!" he called, and they at once rallied. He took from the store a number of bombs and a candle, which he placed in a tin; then, with his batman and one man of the 13th, to whom he handed his rifle, he climbed over the open above the fork to a point from which they could easily throw their missiles into the support trench. The fuses of these crude "jam-tins" required to be kindled with a candle or a cigarette-end. McSharry was lighting the

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<sup>18</sup> See pp. 89 and 206.

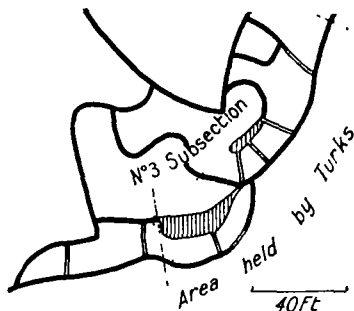
<sup>19</sup> See plates at pp. 50 and 220

candle inside the tin when down the communication trench on his right came a file of Turks. The leader was advancing confidently, but those behind him, about a dozen in number, seemed to be without enthusiasm, peering through the half-dark. The leading Turks had passed McSharry and were already some eight yards down the communication trench when they caught sight of the three Australians. Most of the Turkish heads disappeared



at once below the side of the trench, but the leader took aim over the parapet and fired, the bullet passing through McSharry's hat.<sup>20</sup> At the same time the men with McSharry began throwing their bombs into the communication trench—first one or two singly, then half-a-dozen in quick succession. The trench was wide, and it was the easiest matter to "lob" the jam-tins into it. The Turks in the main position above, hearing the noise, and not realising that their comrades were below, began to throw their bombs in the same direction. One survivor scrambled from the trench and ran back to the post; the rest were killed.

The enemy in Quinn's now found themselves in a short section of front and support trench, the former being half-filled with loose earth so as to form a series of depressions. Of these the farthest on each flank was firmly held by Australians, while the support trench was practically all roofed over and comprised two intensely dark bomb-proofs, from which three communication trenches ran



<sup>20</sup> This felt hat was an example of the irregularities of the "Anzac uniform" McSharry had cut off most of its brim, and much fun used to be made of his "Irish hat with the little brim"



towards the rear. The Turks manned the bomb-proofs, and with much vigour succeeded in making loop-holes in the southern one, through which they could look out on the slope above headquarters and cover it with their fire. But it was mainly on bombs that they had relied, bringing with them what seemed to be an endless supply, together with a number of small oil-lamps with which to light the fuses. Twenty minutes after the first attack a body of Turkish reinforcements managed to charge across No-Man's Land, apparently carrying a further supply of bombs. In consequence of the great length of their fuses those which were showered into the front trenches were almost harmless, the men of the 13th finding that there was ample time to pick them up and fling them back. But numbers, rolling like cricket-balls down the communication trenches, burst among the Australian supports, who had by that time begun to arrive and were watching at a short distance down the hill.

Such was the position when the leading company of the 15th, hurrying from Monash Valley, panted up the slope to where Colonel Burnage and Lieutenant Marks were standing near the damaged headquarters of the post. They knew little of what was happening, save that a number of men, rallied on the slope above them, were holding back with bomb-fire some enemy occupying the centre of the position. "Are you the 15th?" Burnage asked. "The Turks are in the post, and you must charge and drive them out." While he was explaining to the company commander where the enemy were, a bomb exploded at his feet, severely wounding not only him<sup>21</sup> but also Lieutenant Koch,<sup>22</sup> an officer of the reinforcements, and Marks, who was standing near. At this moment McSharry arrived, and from then onwards, although seniors were present at subsequent stages, it was this young officer who, with his thorough knowledge of the post and eminent coolness and decision, most fully grasped and controlled the situation.

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<sup>21</sup> Burnage had not always been a popular officer; but in Gallipoli he had won the affection of his men by the fact that whenever his battalion was engaged he had been in the midst or the front of it. They cheered him as he was carried down the slope.

<sup>22</sup> Capt. H. R. Koch, M.C.; 15th Bn. Jackeroo; of Barfield Station, *via* Banana, Q'land, b. Rockhampton, Q'land, 25 Aug., 1885.

In a few words McSharry gave Captain Sampson, who commanded the leading company, the information he required, and they decided that the company should reinforce the two flanks, which were holding firm. Sampson sent Lieutenant Leitch with two platoons up the slope on the right. As they topped the slope, Leitch and several of his men were hit by the machine-gun fire and rifle-fire from the north. Sampson, who with the remainder of the company dashed northwards across the rear of the post, came under similar heavy fire from the south. Making his way up the communication trench to the front line of No. 4, he found that, while a portion of this sub-section was held by the garrison, at a bend of the trench to the right were lying three or four Australian dead, and beyond this the front line was held by the Turks. Obtaining a few "jam-tins," the reinforced garrison now cleared the rest of No. 4 and part of No. 3. But along most of that sub-section the front trench ran perfectly straight into the maze of dark alleys at the centre of the post, and unerring fire from that end made it for the time being impossible to clear the front line further.

Meanwhile, at the headquarters of the post, Colonel Pope had arrived to take command in place of Colonel Burnage. An instruction had been received from General Godley that the lost trenches must be retaken at all costs, and the orders issued by one or other of the senior commanders to almost every arriving company of reinforcements were that it must charge and drive the Turks from the post. As the morning went on, several inquiries reached Quinn's through Colonel Monash's headquarters as to whether the troops had yet charged and retaken the lost trenches. But McSharry, and some of the younger officers who had lived in the post, though at least as determined to recapture it, perceived what some of the seniors did not—that although it was easy to order a charge, it was most difficult to decide how or in what direction a charge could be launched which would in any way help to clear out the enemy; while it was certain that movement on to the crest meant the annihilation of any troops who attempted it. McSharry, like Perry, grasped the fact that

the intruding Turks had now been "bottled" in the bomb-proofs and damaged front line, in which they could do little harm and must shortly surrender or be killed. He realised that with the advance of daylight the enemy's last chance of sending reinforcements had vanished. At 3.50 the guns of Sykes's 2nd New Zealand Battery on Plugge's had begun to sweep with their shrapnel the narrow No-Man's Land and the Turkish trenches. It was then still so dark, and the target so narrow, that many shells burst in rear of Quinn's, wounding a number of the defenders, including Captains Forsythe and Jackson.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, the fire was invaluable as a protection to the post. In addition the machine-guns on Pope's could now distinguish friend from enemy, and their fire made it impossible for any except a few individuals to make the perilous journey across No-Man's Land in the open, while they could easily be prevented by bombs from digging a communication trench. To McSharry, very cool in the thick of the fight, it seemed obvious that the one efficacious plan for dealing with the Turks then in Quinn's was by filtering men into the trenches on either side of them to attack them from both flanks through the trenches.

When Captain Hill<sup>24</sup> of the 15th, leading the second company of the supports, reached the post-headquarters and was ordered to "take a hundred men and clear the trenches with the bayonet," the situation had not yet become so secure. Nevertheless, when he hurried thence towards the trenches and asked where the charge was to be made, McSharry told him that there was no need to charge over the crest. Hill also, though as transport officer of his battalion he had only landed with his men a week before, had served in Quinn's, and knew well what were the chances of troops crossing that deadly sky-line. Even on the rear slope, anywhere near the crest, they were completely exposed to fire except when moving through communication trenches. He therefore decided to retake the lost sector as McSharry advised, not by charging over the roof of the bomb-proofs and so into the front line—

<sup>23</sup> Maj.-Gen. R. E. Jackson, C.M.G., D.S.O., A.A. & Q.M.G., 3rd Aust. Div., 1917/18. Officer of Aust. Permanent Forces; of Perth, W. Aust.; b. Crow's Nest, Q'land, 1 Jan., 1886.

<sup>24</sup> Brig. J. Hill, M.C.; 15th Bn. Schoolmaster, of Rockhampton, Q'land, b. Cambuslang, Lanarkshire, Scotland, 12 Apr., 1888

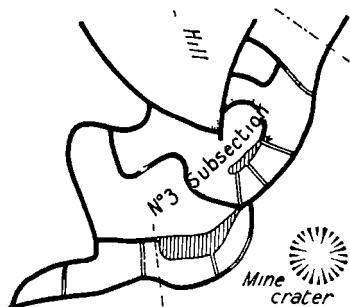
which he knew to involve almost certain destruction—but by forming up his men behind the left of the post, as near to the crest as they could safely go, and then charging diagonally across the rear slope into the communication trenches and bomb-proofs held by the enemy. From these he intended to fight his way through to the front line.

He accordingly led his men up the slope on the left, to a point where a bullet grazing his scalp informed him that the limit of safe ground had been reached. Some of his troops, who had fought previously in Quinn's, seemed nervous of that dreaded crest. Realising that recklessness was required for this task, Hill bethought him of the men of the regimental transport whom he had previously commanded. These were tall, wiry fellows from the bush and western plains of Queensland, horsemen from birth, who had all stubbornly undergone a military sentence in Egypt for refusing to remove the unauthorised cocks' feathers from their hats. On landing at Anzac they had asked Lieutenant Little if they might belong to his platoon, and he had gladly agreed. Hill now sent for Little, who at once went to fetch his men. "Come on, transport," he said. "They want you to show them how to do it." The men grinned and followed keenly, being eager that their mates should now see them sharing the danger.

Major Quinn had by this time arrived and taken over from McSharry the duty of direction. Hill and Little drew up their men in two lines at right angles to the trenches. When they were ready, Quinn blew his whistle, and Hill's line dashed forward. A second or two later Quinn similarly sent forward Little.

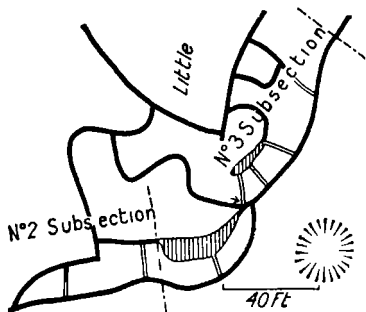
The moment Hill's men raised a cheer, there broke out a tempest of Turkish bombs surpassing anything known at Anzac. The tangle of trenches in the narrow "Y" below the bomb-proofs was covered with flashes and dust. Some of the men dashed on, into and over saps, till they reached the crest. Others attained one or other of the communication trenches. Hill, after rushing nine yards across the open, turned up a trench which ended in the left bomb-proof. As

he reached the dark entrance, two rifles flashed, but the shots missed. Cramming himself against the wall outside, he emptied his rifle into the interior. As nothing stirred, he entered and found two of the enemy lying dead. Boxes of rifle ammunition and bombs and two small flags of blue silk showed that the place had been heavily occupied, but the enemy had fled. Hill fired into each of the tunnels leading to the firing line. One was blocked by a dead Turk, but Hill crawled along another and peered into the front line.



The front trench was bare of any living thing. The tumbled earth half filled it, and on this were lying numbers of the enemy, dead. But from the right there came bullets which caused him hurriedly to withdraw. He had seen enough to know that the front trench could not in any case be safely occupied until it was cleared. He therefore set his men to creep forward as he had done, and to build across it a barricade, from behind which bombs could be thrown so as to clear another sector.

Meanwhile Little's party, following Hill, had been driven by the Turkish bomb-fire to the right and left of No. 3. There, on the rear slope close behind the front line, they remained firing at a few of the enemy who were partially exposed to them while running backwards or forwards across No-Man's Land. It was certain death to stand up, but Little's party held on in spite of a certain amount of rifle- and bomb-fire, crouching below the crest, though with no very definite object. At length, seeing Major Carter



standing lower down the hill, Little called to him to send some bombs. These were an unaccustomed weapon, but Little asked for them rather in order to feel himself doing something. Then, throwing bombs freely, the party gradually approached the entrance of the second, or right-hand, bomb-proof. This seemed to be strongly held; but the enemy in it was being suppressed by men firing at the loop-holes, only one Turk, apparently, replying by shooting through the side of the chamber. At this juncture a sergeant, by name Simon,<sup>25</sup> suggested to Little that they should attempt to rush the place. That venture seemed too desperate, but Simon, Little, and a youngster by name Traise<sup>26</sup> crept closer, until Simon, from the trench by the entrance, actually slipped a bomb through the loop-hole. There was a scuffle inside, followed by an explosion. The fire from the loop-hole ceased.

Little's action in bombing back the enemy was, though at the time he had not known it, precisely the operation required. He seems to have been joined by a party under McSharry, which was keeping up a rapid bomb-fire with some newly-arrived stick-bombs.<sup>27</sup> This largely helped to clear the front line.

All engaged at this point now realised that, except for a few Turks isolated in some part of the nest of trenches around the right bomb-proof, the post had been cleared. Hill came out of the trenches and called to Little to direct his bombardment into No-Man's Land, so as to prevent the enemy from reinforcing. There were still occasional signs of Turks bolting over the open, and the Australians were cutting the bomb-fuses short, since in throwing at running men they needed a quick explosion.<sup>28</sup> A bomb which Little threw at a Turk in No-Man's Land exploded as it hit the ground. The next one burst in his own hand. With his face cut to ribbons, blinded, his chest and knee torn, his arm a bleeding stump, he was supported to the rear. "We've got them beaten all right,"

<sup>25</sup> Lieut. E. W. Simon, M.M.; 15th Bn. School teacher; of Toowong, Q'land; b. Coomera, Q'land, 29 Dec., 1895.

<sup>26</sup> Pte. J. H. Traise (No. 354, 15th Bn.). Warehouse assistant; b. Paddington, Q'land, 1893. Killed in action, 29 May, 1915.

<sup>27</sup> These were devised to explode on percussion. But some of the throwers, being completely uninstructed, omitted to take out the safety pins, and consequently their missiles failed to explode. The supply of "jam-tins" was comparatively ample, since, although one small store was buried by the mine explosion, 150 were borrowed from the 1st Australian Division.

<sup>28</sup> The procedure was to cut away half the fuse, light the stump of it, and then, when it sparked, hold it for a moment before throwing. This ensured a burst within about two seconds.

he said to Durrant; and then had himself taken to Major Carter in order to impress upon that officer the need for rewarding Sergeant Simon's work.

Hill, having the enemy now completely cut off in a defined space, had just sent a report to headquarters when to his astonishment he heard that another charge was being prepared. What had happened was that Colonel Chauvel, commanding the Left Central Section, after sending Colonel Pope to the post, had decided to proceed thither himself, lest the change of command at such a juncture might lead to confusion. Leaving Colonel Monash in charge in the valley, he had reached Quinn's about 5 o'clock, while Hill's attack through the trenches was in progress. Standing with Pope and Durrant, only a few yards below the scene of the action, Chauvel had waited for the result of McSharry's and Hill's operations. But though for an hour the bomb-fighting had been continuous, and a stream of men gashed with ugly wounds trickled constantly down Monash Valley, yet the Turks still held part of the trenches. In one company of the garrison four officers—Captain Forsythe and Lieutenants A. F. Smith,<sup>29</sup> Vine-Hall,<sup>30</sup> and Hartnell-Sinclair<sup>31</sup> had been wounded. All this time the hillside in rear of the post was crowded with supports,<sup>32</sup> smoking, chatting, and laughing as they waited their turn for any work which might be necessary. Thirty yards above them were Little's bombers; a few yards higher still, unceasingly watched by Turkish riflemen and machine-gunners on a semi-circle of surrounding ridges, was the edge of the bare crest over which it was deadly peril to venture. Immediately beyond that edge lay a portion of the front line of Quinn's, still believed to be in possession of the enemy. Other means of reaching it had been tried. There remained the plan of charging straight up the slope, over the roof of the bomb-proof, and so into it. The bombers were still cutting off the Turks from succour or retreat, but there were signs that the enemy intended to attack on the left. Godley had ordered that

<sup>29</sup> Lieut. A. F. Smith; 13th Bn. Auctioneer and general agent; of Sydney; b. Gloucester, N.S.W., 23 Oct., 1885.

<sup>30</sup> Lieut. N. F. Vine-Hall; 13th Bn. Wool buyer; of North Sydney, N.S.W.; b. Neutral Bay, N.S.W., 27 March, 1888. Died of wounds, 3 June, 1915.

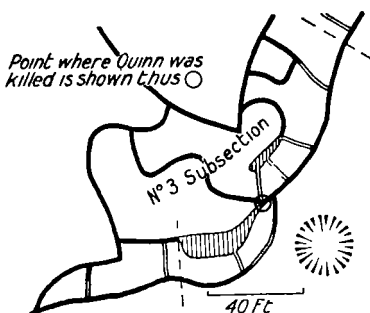
<sup>31</sup> Lieut. H. Hartnell-Sinclair; 13th Bn. Clerk, of Paddington, N.S.W.; b. Wandsworth, Eng., 26 Jan., 1885. Died of wounds, 9 Aug., 1915.

<sup>32</sup> Vol. XII, plate 76.

the trench must be retaken at all costs, and Chauvel, who had shown conspicuous coolness throughout this crisis, himself concluded that the first counter-attack had failed, and that the risk of charging over the roof of the bomb-proof must now be faced. He accordingly gave this order personally to Major Quinn.

The next reserve waiting on the slope comprised Quinn's own company and Herring's of the 13th. Colonel Pope called those officers together and settled the plan for the charge. About 150 men were stationed in three lines, fifty in each, Quinn's on the left, Herring's on the right.<sup>33</sup> Pope's own expectation (he wrote afterwards) was that a Turkish machine-gun which swept the crest "would mow down my first two waves and leave only the third to deal with the Turks in the fire-trench." Hill did not succeed in convincing Chauvel that the effort was unnecessary. McSharry, however, who was beside Quinn, persisted in urging that to charge over the crest was to throw away lives to no purpose, since the small remnant of the enemy was now being driven to submission by attack through the trenches. Quinn went several times to Pope and obtained permission for the charge to be delayed, but eventually further postponement was refused. Returning to McSharry, who still urged the other method, Quinn twice placed his whistle between his teeth as if to give the signal, but removed it again, deciding to go to the front line and reconnoitre it for himself before he ordered his men to charge. Taking McSharry, he walked straight up the main communication trench to the heart of No. 3, and was turning into the front line when a shot came along it from behind, and he fell back dead, almost into McSharry's arms.

Quinn had walked into the straight section of trench previously described, along



<sup>33</sup> In one of these lines, in consequence of a quarrel caused by a man of the 15th pushing one of the 13th (or *vice versa*), the two fought with fists. After some moments they realised the position, and resumed their place in the line.



which the Turks were shooting. This trench happened to run directly into the southern bomb-proof, and it was probably from that shelter that the shot came. Quinn's death delayed the charge, but Herring was about to give the signal, when—about 6 o'clock—a furious burst from the enemy's machine-guns at German Officers' Trench raised clouds of dust from the crest. To go into that storm was annihilation; but almost immediately afterwards, to the surprise of the waiting line, the fire slackened and almost ceased. Herring gave the word, and the men dashed over the crest. It was a gallant spectacle, and hundreds looking on from Pope's Hill and from the slope behind Quinn's expected to see the brave line swept away by machine-gun fire. To the astonishment of all, few men fell. By some strange chance the enemy had chosen that moment to launch an attack upon the left of Quinn's. As he issued from his trenches, the whirlwind of fire preceding his assault stopped. The Turkish machine-guns at German Officers' could not shoot for fear of hitting their own men. The Australian attacking party was thus practically unharmed; and the men of the 15th on the left from the edge of the crest poured a heavy fire into the emerging Turks. Those of the 13th on the right, with Lieutenant Pulling,<sup>34</sup> Sergeant Scott,<sup>35</sup> Corporal Howden,<sup>36</sup> and others at their head, jumped into the front line beyond the bomb-proof. Several were shot at its exits, which it was still impossible to pass. But they garrisoned part of the vacant trench. Others, reaching sectors already overcrowded, returned.

The charge having been made, and the section of front line, which had previously been commanded only by Perry's riflemen, having been reoccupied, it was assumed at post-head-quarters that the fight was over and, in accordance with an order from General Godley, working parties were sent up to reconstruct the wrecked trenches. It was then found that men were shot when attempting to pass certain points in the post. As a matter of fact, the position had not been altered by the charge. The enemy were still in the southern bomb-proof, no more subdued than before, and anyone

<sup>34</sup> Lieut. C. W. L. Pulling; 13th Bn. School teacher, b. Bowral, N.S.W., 14 Aug., 1891. Killed in action, 7 Aug., 1915.

<sup>35</sup> See note on p. 111.

<sup>36</sup> Maj. H. C. Howden, M.C.; 48th Bn. Commercial traveller; of Northcote, Vic.; b. Preston, Vic., 1890. Died of wounds, 5 July, 1917.



QUINN'S, SHOWING SUPPORTS GATHERED ON THE SLOPE IN REAR OF THE POST ON 29TH MAY, 1915  
(The small crosses mark the position of the waiting troops.)

*Aust. War Memorial Official Photo No. G1003*

*To face p 220*

Col Chauvel

Gen Godley



Capt Durrant

Col Cannan

GENERAL GODLEY AT QUINN'S POST, MAY 1915

*Aust War Memorial Official Photo No G1015*

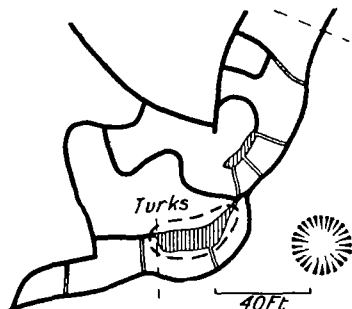


TURKISH PRISONERS COMING OUT OF QUINN'S, 29TH MAY, 1915

*Aust War Memorial Official Photo No G1012*

*To face p 221*

attempting to pass its exits was killed. The linguists among Perry's men exhausted their Arabic in the endeavour to entice the Turks to give themselves up. Perry then wrote a message explaining this position and flung it to the rear of the post, from which he was still cut off. Upon this, as a further sign to the enemy to surrender, white handkerchiefs were tied to bayonets and dangled by Major Herring and others near the mouth of the southern bomb-proof.



About the same time Hill, who had now cleared the tunnels of the northern bomb-proof, heard the enemy calling in the southern one. As the sounds appeared to be plaintive, he most bravely walked through a tunnel into the chamber occupied by the Turks. At the same moment two Australian privates<sup>37</sup> entered at the other end, with bayonets fixed and eyes peering into the darkness. Crowded against the wall, shrinking from the bayonets with which the two Australians, fresh from the sunlight, were unconsciously prodding them, were seventeen Turkish soldiers. The officer who had accompanied them had some time before attempted to make his way back to the Turkish trenches, and had not returned. Bombs had exploded among them—twenty-three of their dead lay in the trenches and the bomb-proof, of which the floor, walls, and roof were scattered with the torn remains of their comrades. The wretched survivors were terror-stricken, apprehending the fate too often reserved by their own people for any wounded enemy who fell into their hands. But the waiting Australians slapped them on the back and offered them cigarettes as they marched down the hill.<sup>38</sup>

It was about 8 a.m. when the Turks surrendered, and with their capture the fighting ceased. Chauvel had by then

<sup>37</sup> One of these men appears to have been L/Cpl C Grimson (of Yullundry and Hornsby, N S W), 1st L.H. Regt

<sup>38</sup> The Turks showed their relief by seizing and kissing the hands of their opponents, one of them embracing Maj. Tilney, who stood next to Chauvel, on both cheeks

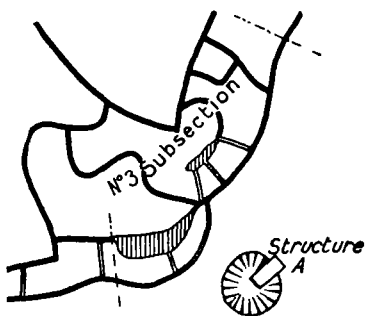
summoned the 10th Light Horse, the last reserve in the Left Central Section, and Godley had taken the precaution of sending to Monash Valley the Canterbury Battalion also. The struggle had cost the Australians 33 killed and 178 wounded, almost all within the narrow limits of Quinn's Post. Eleven men of the 13th were found covered by the earth of the explosion, by the shock of which they had been killed. The ascertained losses of the enemy amounted to between 50 and 60 killed, and their total casualties in the Quinn's area were probably about 300.<sup>39</sup> The weak feint attack which had been simultaneously made upon Russell's Top, where a few Turkish bomb-throwers advanced and threw grenades into the trench of the 9th Light Horse, had been easily repulsed.

After the fight the front trench of No. 3 Subsection at Quinn's was too much obstructed with fallen earth to be immediately reoccupied. The heads of the communication trenches were therefore held by sentries, while working parties laboured all day to clear and build up the broken trench-walls. The 13th Battalion was relieved during the morning, and 200 men of the 15th were put in, together with 65 of the 10th Light Horse under Lieutenant Kidd,<sup>40</sup> and 165 New Zealanders of the Canterbury Battalion. Before this fight General Godley had already decided to employ the New Zealand Infantry Brigade—then resting beneath the Sphinx after its return from Helles—in order to withdraw the heavily-tried 4th Brigade for a rest. Orders were now given for this relief to be hastened. The New Zealanders supplied part of the working parties, and by dark all but four yards of the front trench had been repaired. At dusk it was discovered that the enemy also had been busily working in his trenches, and a strange structure of timber and sandbags (which prisoners explained to be a bomb-proof necessitated by the increased bombing by the Australians) appeared over a Turkish trench at the north of Quinn's. The Anzac artillery was turned upon it, causing some damage. Two more important works, however, were discovered at the same time

<sup>39</sup> The estimate made by the A & N.Z. Army Corps staff—600 killed and 2,000 wounded—was certainly, as often happened, enormously exaggerated.

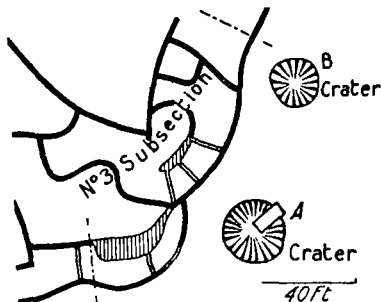
<sup>40</sup> Maj. T. A. Kidd; 10th L.H. Regt. Accountant; of Geraldton, W. Aust.; b. Stawell, Vic., 17 May, 1879.

almost touching the front line of Quinn's, which had been most heavily bombed all day from some position very close to it. These structures were reported by the front-line officers at dusk, but their importance does not seem to have been realised till dawn of May 30th, when it was perceived that the enemy had erected in or near his mine-crater a formidable gallery of wood and sandbags, eight feet high and fifteen in length. Colonel Pope, still acting as commandant, hurried forward to view this blockhouse, and



General Godley, greatly disturbed by his report, ordered him to seize and destroy the structure. It was then ascertained<sup>41</sup> that the second Turkish position was thirty yards to the left of this, in the crater of the old mine fired by the engineers on May 28th,

which had broken the surface of No-Man's Land. It had been fortified with sandbags, which could be seen about six yards from the edge of Quinn's. Pope decided to send a party against this (which he designated "Work B") simultaneously with the assault upon the other



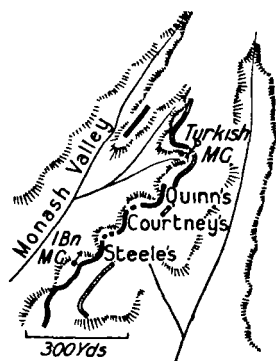
(known as "Work A"). The troops allotted to him were the garrison of Quinn's and his own battalion, the 16th.

The attack was arranged to take place at 1.5 p.m., by daylight. It has been explained that exposure even for a few seconds at Quinn's meant instant and deadly peril. Nevertheless, when Pope informed Lieutenant Kidd,

<sup>41</sup> Reconnaissance was made by Col Pope and Lieut O. L. Davey (of Kent Town, S. Aust.), the officer controlling the Quinn's miners. Observation was no easy matter in consequence of the continuous bombing of No. 3 Subsection.

commanding the detachment of the 10th Light Horse, that he wanted sixty men of that regiment to make the attack, and two officers to lead them, the immediate reply was—"Put me down for one and Colpitts<sup>42</sup> (a brother officer) for the other." These two were accordingly chosen, to each being allotted a sergeant and thirty men. Two smaller working parties, of the Canterbury Battalion, were also organised, and Kidd was ordered to hold out until these could be sent to demolish the structures. If they could not be sent over the top, tunnels must be made. Meanwhile, in accordance with the practice at Quinn's, the trenches were to be packed as a precaution against counter-attack. To cover the assault, bombing was to be kept up by the garrison, and the enemy's flanking machine-guns were to be suppressed by the artillery and machine-guns which normally supported Quinn's.

Of the meaning of such "covering fire" the history of the A.I.F. contains no better illustration than that afforded by an incident which occurred on this day. The 1st Australian Division had undertaken to smother at the critical moment a Turkish machine-gun north of Quinn's which ordinarily swept the front of that post. The trenches of the Chessboard, in which it was emplaced, could be seen from the rear of Steele's. A special emplacement was therefore to be built on the southern shoulder of Steele's, in order to permit one of the 1st Battalion's machine-guns to fire across the rear of its own post up Monash Valley against the Turkish gun. The attack was almost due to start, when General Walker, of the 1st Division, visiting Steele's, found that this emplacement had not yet been prepared. Since time would not then permit of elaborate concealment, sandbags were hurriedly piled to form an embrasure, in which the Australian machine-gun was hurriedly mounted a few minutes before 1 o'clock.



<sup>42</sup> Maj J. W. Colpitts; Aust Provost Corps Farmer, of Winchester, W. Aust.;  
b Blyth, Northumberland, Eng., 25 Nov., 1874

The moment the attack started, Private Arnott,<sup>43</sup> a young "compulsory trainee" in the Commonwealth Citizen Forces, directed the fire of his gun upon the Turkish weapon, and quickly killed or drove away its crew. Meanwhile his corporal, Bint,<sup>44</sup> discovered a second hostile gun, which he pointed out to the boy. While the latter was shooting at it, the first Turkish gun came into action again, and one of the two was turned upon him, searching for his loop-hole, which topped the white cliff behind Steele's. While Arnott endeavoured to smother the second Turkish gun, General Walker and others, looking on across the recess of Steele's, saw the stream of hostile bullets cutting the cliff face close beside Arnott, travelling down one side of the opening, across the cliff below it, back again up the side, and finally across the top of the loop-hole, ripping the bags and tumbling them from the parapet. The boy did not even for a moment relax his fire. His gun needed adjustment, and he was leaning forward to effect this, when several bullets entered his jaw, blowing away the teeth on one side and almost cutting his face in half. But during a critical time he had diverted the fire of one enemy machine-gun, if not two, from the attacking party at Quinn's to himself.<sup>45</sup>



At 1.5 the onlookers on the other crests saw the two attacking parties scramble from Quinn's and stand looking down into some enemy work, bombing, shooting, and lunging with bayonets; then, as they jumped in and were lost to view, there broke out the inevitable tempest of rifle-fire and

<sup>43</sup> Pte. T. Arnott, D.C.M. (No 74, 1st Bn.). Pattern maker; b. Sydney, 1894.

<sup>44</sup> Cpl. C. A. Bint (No. 77; 1st. Bn.). Painter, of Canley Vale, N.S.W.; b. Balham, London, Eng., 6 Aug., 1878. Died, 10 Dec., 1930.

<sup>45</sup> The rest of the crew managed to dismount the gun, thus preventing its destruction. Arnott was carried round to the medical aid-post at Steele's, where Gen. Walker told him that he would be recommended for the Distinguished Conduct Medal. Those who looked on were surprised to see the boy pull himself together and faintly salute Walker. At the beginning of the fight Pte. R. Cumming (of Sydney), another trainee, also fired the gun, but was displaced by Arnott, the latter being "number one" of the crew. Pte. C P M Sharpe (of Sydney) also was wounded.



bombing, which continued for several hours. As no sign could be seen of the Australians, the rumour went round that they had been annihilated. But by that time there had been received in Quinn's a message thrown in a cartridge-case by Colpitts, not ten yards away. It ran:—

I have seven men left. No sandbags. Want support, but think it is only sacrificing more men to send supports. Will try to dig in and hold on, leaving it to you to decide *re* supports. Good luck. Ten casualties.

Pope's answer was to instruct him to do as much damage as possible and then retire. In order to assist, Pope sent out ten New Zealanders of the digging party. Only half of them reached the crater, one falling into it dead and another severely wounded. At 3.5 a further note came from Colpitts:—

Please tunnel through as fast as possible. Would rush back, but don't like the idea of abandoning my wounded. Suggest you have plenty of supports ready to come to our assistance in case of a counter-attack which enemy appear to be preparing. Have done all damage possible.

Both attacks had reached the enemy's works, which proved to be not two, but three, in number. That facing Colpitts was a crater, the nearer edge of which had been built up with huge Turkish sandbags as large as sacks of chaff. Kidd's was found to be a small crescent-shaped trench, dug apparently on the Anzac side of a shallow crater. But south of this again Kidd's party had stumbled into a third work, not mentioned in the orders, consisting of a short trench connected with the Turkish front line by a sap roofed over with baulks of timber, sandbags, and earth. This almost touched Kidd's trench, and at the moment of the rush the Turks were apparently working to connect the two, but a foot of earth still remained between them.

In Kidd's trench had been a Turkish bombing party. After a short sharp bayonet-duel some of the surviving enemy scuttled off through a tunnel in the back of the trench. Others were shot scrambling over the parapots. Twenty-two of Kidd's party and one captured Turk found themselves squeezed into a trench so small that movement was impossible. Shouting, and the flash of bayonets a few yards to their right,

showed that their nine comrades were fighting in some previously unsuspected position; but the parties had no periscopes, the hail of bullets sweeping the surface made observation impossible, and before there was time to concert measures the inevitable counter-attack had begun.

The crater which formed the horizon for Kidd's party now served as a natural "catchment" for the enemy's bombs. Having themselves been given only sixteen bombs (which were the first that most of them had seen), the light horsemen<sup>46</sup> for several hours successfully carried on the fight by throwing back every Turkish bomb which fell into or on the edge of their trench. Eventually, however, two of these missiles, burying themselves under some débris, could not be found in time, and exploded, wounding many in the trench.<sup>47</sup> In addition, the strain caused by this manner of combat, and by the continuous noise, dust, and acrid smoke, was exceedingly heavy.

About 4 o'clock Kidd's party saw bayonets moving in the third work, south of them; and presently rifle muzzles, appearing over the edge of the trench, began to fire along it. The men, thinking their comrades were firing on them in error, called out. But the rifles were those of Turks. The light horsemen in the "third" work, having almost all been hit, had passed back to Quinn's the most seriously injured, and had then themselves retired. The enemy who had reoccupied the position now suddenly leapt out and attempted to surround Kidd's men, every one of whom had been wounded, so that few could still handle a rifle. The light horsemen took the only course possible—to rush back to Quinn's. As they rose, the Turks fell back. Every man from the trench reached Quinn's,<sup>48</sup> but so dazed and overstrained that Colonel Pope

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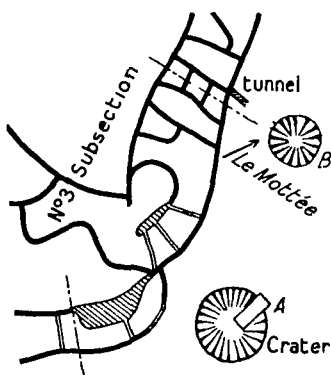
<sup>46</sup> Lieut Kidd has recorded that Cpl. B. M. Fenwick (of Perth, W. Aust.) was especially prominent in bomb-throwing.

<sup>47</sup> None were killed. Tpr. R. G. Hann (of Fremantle, W. Aust.) was wounded in the eyes.

<sup>48</sup> An incident, interesting in its sidelight upon the mentality of the Turkish soldier, is recorded. The captured Turk and the light horsemen had become very friendly. He was given water, cigarettes, and biscuit, and in return offered his sour-bread ration. When the trench was being evacuated he was left at liberty. But seeing a Turk attempting to bayonet one of the troopers, who was hampered by his wound in leaving the trench, he seized a rifle and shot the attacker. He thus saved the Australian's life, but was immediately killed by his own side.

was unable to obtain from them a coherent description of "Work A," which still remained something of a mystery.

Colpitts' party succeeded in keeping "Work B." Twelve Australians had reached it, most of the Turks scurrying away through a shallow communication trench. Here also heavy bombing had immediately followed, and the light horsemen, catching the grenades like so many cricket-balls, had succeeded in throwing most of them back. Colpitts himself, observing that the communication trench seemed to lead towards Kidd's position, crawled along it, until, hearing shouts, he saw before him what appeared to be Kidd's crater crowded with Turkish bayonets and head-gear. Although observed, he regained his trench, and prepared his men to meet the then threatening counter-attack.<sup>49</sup> But the enemy did not reach the northern crater. By this time the wounded in it were desperately in need of assistance, one, Trooper Reid,<sup>50</sup> dying, and the others appealing for water of which there was none to give them. But tunnelling had now commenced, the Quinn's miners and men of the Canterbury Battalion working from one end and Colpitts' party at the other. When the sound of picks could be already heard through the earth, Pope called in Colpitts and the survivors. Lieutenant Le Mottée<sup>51</sup> with six volunteers, mostly of the Canterbury Battalion, gallantly ran out to take their place, and about 11.30 broke through into the tunnel from Quinn's. The wounded were removed; and



<sup>49</sup> Against Colpitts' orders his batman, Tpr. F. S. Prentice (of Katanning, W Aust.), had followed him in the attack. Now, shot through the knee, Prentice seized the rifle of the dead New Zealander, and propped himself against the side of the crater, ready to shoot.

<sup>50</sup> Pte. R. M. Reid (No. 186, 10th L.H. Regt.). Bank clerk, b Staffordshire, Eng., 1887. Killed in action, 30 May, 1915.

<sup>51</sup> Maj. J. B. Le Mottée; Canterbury Bn. Soldier; of Greymouth, N.Z., b Hull, Yorks., Eng., 18 Feb., 1893.

"Work B," roofed to form a bombing or listening post, was thenceforth connected with Quinn's.<sup>52</sup>

At this stage the 4th Australian Infantry Brigade, which for five weeks had fought continuously at the head of Monash Valley, was withdrawn to a sheltered reserve area on the slopes below the Sphinx. Quinn's and Courtney's were handed over to the New Zealand infantry, the 1st Light Horse Brigade remaining at Pope's.

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<sup>52</sup> Le Mottée's party, which had been instructed to convert the crater into a bomb-proof by covering it with timber, had almost finished its task when, about dawn on May 31, a Turkish bomb burst in the position, killing Sgt. D. N. H. Downie (of Nagambie, Vic.), an Australian engineer who was one of the volunteers, and Pte. G. C. Willetts (of Hokitika, N.Z.) of the Canterbury Battalion, and wounding all the rest but two. The crater was temporarily abandoned, but was immediately reoccupied by Lieut. D. A. Jackson (of Perth, W. Aust.), and a few of the 10th Light Horse, who dashed out to it over the top. The instructions given to this party were to take no offensive action. Until May 31 it lay quietly in the position, although during that night a Turk passed so close that he could have been bayoneted. On the same night, communication through the tunnel being now well established, the position was handed over to the New Zealanders then occupying Quinn's.