

ET321GODWINDIARY

A handwritten diary entitled “ Copy of Report & Diary of C.C.G. at the Dardanelles 12th April 1915 to 25th May 1915.”

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## Copy of Report of C.C.G. at the Dardanelles 12th April – 25th May 1915.

Arrived Cairo from Khartoum 7.15am Monday 12th April – reported & left for Alexandria 12 noon. On our arrival at Alexandria (Edwards & I) we reported ourselves at the Head Quarters of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force & were both struck by the fact that the staff seemed entirely composed of “dugout” officers & officers of the Indian Army. Genl. Sir Ian Hamilton & some of his staff had already gone to Lemnos & considerable confusion was evident. The person who seemed to be running the whole show was the embarkation staff officer Captain Brown, 7th Manchester Regt, a Territorial, but a most capable officer & the only one who seemed to have things at his finger end. We were sent to embark on the “Margaret” on the 13th transferred on the 14th to the “Southland” in which ship we eventually sailed on the 16th, with rest of Sir Ian Hamilton’s staff & The King’s Own Scottish Borderers. Genl. D’Amade & two of his staff were also on board. The voyage to Lemnos where we arrived on 18th March was uneventful – we passed islands almost all the way – no lights were shown at night at all. Portholes were closed & covered with brown paper or dusters – on arrival at Lemnos we learnt that an attempt, by an Austrian or Turkish torpedo boat, had been made to sink the “Manitou”, which left Alexandria shortly before we did, with Artillery on board. The commander of the Torpedo boat came quite close alongside the “Manitou” informing her Captain they were going to sink her. There seems to have been some confusion in lowering boats, & about 150 men (Gunnery) were thrown into the water & drowned. In the meantime 3 torpedoes were fired at the “Manitou” – 2 missed, & the third hit, but did not explode. The torpedo boat was chased by one or two of our destroyers who had come up, & was eventually run aground on one of the islands. & her crew captured. The “Manitou” meanwhile hauled up her boats again, resumed her way to Lemnos. At Lemnos on the 18th on our arrival, we reported ourselves to Genl. Sir Ian Hamilton on the “Arcadian” & were informed that we were to be attached to the H.Q. Australian & New Zealand Corps – on Monday 19th we transferred to the “Minnewaska” on which the Australian Headquarters were – the A & N.Z. Army Corps was composed of 2 divisions, - the Aus: Div: commanded by Major Genl. Bridges, & the Aus: & New Zealand division commanded by Major Genl. Godley – Genl. Broadwood (*Birdwood?*) & his staff were on board the Minnewaska, also Genl Bridges & his staff – all day of the 20th worked with Col. Leslie & Commander Dix on scheme for his subaction at Kapa Tepe – in fact we were handed over to Col. Leslie the Military Landing Officer, under whom we were to work as Assistant Military landing Officers. Roughly the landing scheme was as follows – the 3rd Aus: Brigade under Col MacLagan (Yorkshire Regt) was to carry out the landing & having done so was to cover the landing of the rest of the Army Corps. On approaching the shore the transports were to advance in lines of three thus:

(*arrow pointing up*) getting as close as possible to  
X X X the shore, the troops were  
X X X to be towed in boats to the beach.  
X X X these lines were to be led by

Three destroyers with 580 men of the 3rd Brigade in each. Warships were to cover the landing with their guns from both flanks.

On 21st April moved to the “Noveau”. 5th Batt. Aus on board & H.Q. of 2nd Aus: Brigade. The boat was very crowded – only cabins for officers & about 60 officers were on board. Slept on deck & fed in reliefs – 1,000 troops on board & 300 horses – proper accommodation for about 600 men only.

There were a great many details to be constantly arranged as to the distribution of the troops, animals, guns & stores for landing. It was important that vehicles & horses to pull them, should be in the same ship & so on. The transport of the force & its’ safe arrival at the point of attack were duties for which the Navy was entirely responsible. As a matter of fact the navy landed us about ¼ mile to the north of the spot intended, which as things turned out was a most providential mistake. While working at these preliminary arrangements with various Naval staff officers we found them extremely nice fellows to deal with & seemingly very well up in their work, which later opinion we modified somewhat later on.

On the 23rd went on shore for a walk with Edwards & 3 others – lunched on shore, bread & cheese & drank the wine of the country. Beautiful island, crops, red poppies & hills covered with sheep. The harbour of Mudros is very fine – full of Eng. & Fr. transports & warships. Across the mouth of the harbour a boom was stretched with the gateway in the corner as a protection against submarines.

On the 24th at 11pm. We moved out of the harbour so as to land immediately after the covering force. On board was the Brigadier (Col. McKay) Brigade Major (Cass) & Staff Capt (Dukes Wiltshire Regt) of the 2nd Aus. Brigade, all of whom were afterwards wounded - & the 5th Battn. Aus: Infantry. Great excitement on board when we started, everybody anticipating a sort of hoorock (*hooroo – Australian*) across the Gallipoli peninsular with fixed bayonets, loading of revolvers etc.

On the 25th we breakfasted 3am. still moving slowly in towards land. As it began to get light we saw battleships & transports all around us as far as one could see, very little attempt was being made to keep the transports in their lines as was originally intended, but we saw the destroyers right inland discharging their troops to the accompaniment of a lively rifle & machine gun fire from the shore-deafening noise. After a bit the battleships on our left & right opened fire & added to the din. As soon as we got in as close as our Capt. Was allowed to go, we started disembarking down gangways & rope ladders (the men had previously practised in climbing up & down ladders in marching order) into boats which had come back from the shore for us. Some little delay was caused by their bringing some dead & wounded sailors alongside who had to be attended to thus blocking the gangway. All this time there was a deafening row going on, everyone who had a gun of any sort seemed to be letting it off, but it was impossible to see how things were going, as we were about a mile from the shore & the light was bad. At this stage the enemy's artillery had not opened on us.

As soon as the first boats were full we were towed ashore by picket boats in command of Midshipmen. Edwards & I got into a boat together, each with the roll of blankets we had previously made up our minds at all costs not to be separated from these. There were a great many bullets flying around & above us as we went towards shore – but none in our boat was hit. We eventually reached land & splashed ashore with the blankets on our backs. We gained shore just as the enemy's guns opened fire, & found ourselves on a shingly beach 30 to 40 yards broad in a crescent shaped cove, with the land rising straight away from it to a ridge about 400 feet high. This hill & ridge the 3rd Brigade had already made good by the time we had landed. Immediately on landing we deposited our kits under the cliff, took our coats, collected on the beach parties whom we had brought with us & set to disembarking troops & ammunition from the boats which by now were pouring in from the ships. The beach was not a pleasant sight – a considerable number of dead and wounded men were lying about - towards the northern end round a bluff of the cliff there were dead lying in clumps, just as they had been mown down by machine guns as they were disembarking. It was now our duty to find out how things were going, collect units as they landed, & send them up with all speed to the top of the ridge beyond which we could hear a fierce battle was raging. It was about ½ hour after we landed, while I was talking to Aubrey Herbert, Interpreter, who suddenly dived into a hole while I was speaking to him, that I first noticed shrapnel & common shell were coming over from the Turks. When they actually started with their guns I don't remember – Herbert had been at Mons so knew about shell fire than I did. All that day (25th) & night we worked away at the disembarkation of men & ammunition & next morning (26th) we landed some guns & horses. It struck me afterwards that if we had landed our 4 howitzers (these were the only guns with the whole force) on the Sunday afternoon (25th) they would have been of enormous value – as it was we did not get enough artillery ashore to be much good, for 48 hours. Someone was very much to blame for this. The following were points about the landing which I jotted down shortly afterwards.

A very lucky thing we landed where we did & not ¼ mile to the south, as there the Turks had barbed wire arranged in lines in the sea & all their guns trained n that bit of beach, which to the gradual slope of the sea would have been quite untenable. As it was we, we obtained good solid cover from the hill overlooking our cove – there was no wire & the Turks evidently had to alter their gun position which took a little time.

Magnificent behaviour of the Midshipmen who handed the picquet boats & launches towing in the boats – they were perfectly splendid, keenness of the Australians to get at the Turks.

Wastage caused by “sound” men from the firing line bringing down wounded men to the dressing stations, apparently no orders were issued beforehand to prevent this. It was very noticeable that these Colonials would not realise that it is not a soldiers’ business to leave the firing line to attend men. I several times saw a wounded man attended by 2 & even 3 of his friends, carrying his rifle & kit for him.

The noise. The rattle of musketry & machine guns above, amounting almost to a roar & the blasting of our ships guns from behind us added to which was the bursting of the enemy’s shells overhead – most of these latter went into the water.

The Turks evidently did not like the look of the Australians swarming up the hill with fixed bayonets – they ran & did not really show a strong resistance until they got into their trenches previously prepared on the second ridge.

On the Sunday April 25 we landed 18,000 troops & that night embarked 1,800 casualties for the hospital ships – not a bad performance on an open beach, under fire.

On the Sunday night I fancy it was touch & go whether we hung on, or we were driven back into the sea. I fancy some of the staff were in favour of evacuating, luckily Genl Birdwood would not hear of it, & during the next few days, as we got more men & guns up, we were able to straighten out our line & dig ourselves in. We made good about a mile inland on the first night, & the line held by us was in the form of a wedge with our flanks on the sea & the length of the line was about 3 miles.

On the morning of the 26th the Naval guns got to work. The Queen Elizabeth fires her 15”. Enemy’s guns troubled us less in consequence, but we were severely shelled in the afternoon. New Zealand Division landed.

April 27th. Still hold about the same line, one mile from the shore. Severe shelling of beach. Commander Dix wounded in the head – 1 donkey killed, 4 men wounded, Trawler wrecked by shell, landed some marines & more guns, howitzers & mountain guns.

Originally our beach was divided into 4 sections, each under a military landing officer, who had 60 men under him with complement of officers. After a few days however the other two officers who belonged to Genl. Birdwood’s staff were taken away for duties elsewhere & Edwards & I were left to run the whole the beach under Col. Leslie.

The first two days we landed only men & ammunition & guns, but after that, the Engineers built us 3 piers & we were able to land rations & stores. At first there was considerable confusion on the beach owing to the fact that officers in charge of depots, were unable to make up their minds where they wanted their stores stacked, but this did not seriously delay us to begin with & after a few days when the shelling got more persistent, & the Turks began to search along the beach from the direction of Kapa Tepe, we found it necessary to work largely at night. We arranged all our stores on the beach in traverses, so that on the first sign of a bombardment the beach parties could run under cover between piles of rations or bales of ordnance stores etc. Those, that is to say who might not have time to get to their “dugouts” or “funkholes” as they were more commonly called. The whole face of the hill behind the beach was covered with “dugouts” & shelters & we experienced considerable difficulty in consequence of the scattered nature of the whole base, in making efficient sanitary arrangements. At first none seemed to attempt to cope with this extremely important matter & the provision & detailing of a sanitary staff to take the whole matter of health & cleanliness of the camp in hand, had been quite unseen. We were there 10 days before the matter was really taken in hand.

We received much valuable assistance from the Naval officers on the beach, they being entirely responsible for bringing the boats & lighters to land & for all movements of the transports & supply ships, but the Naval transport arrangements failed lamentably on many occasions, & there were many occasions & very many instances of personnel, guns etc wandering up and down Cape Helles & Kapa Tepe because no definite orders had been given as to their destination.

The Indian Mule Corps we landed for transport work were invaluable – without it we should never got water & food up to the firing line – all night long convoys of Indian Mule Carts & pack mules worked between the Supply Depots on the beach & the units in the firing line. Water was a continual difficulty we depended almost entirely for our supply from water ships. It was sent ashore from the latter in large water lighters & then it had to be pumped into tanks & water carts, distributed along the beach. Water was sent up to the firing line in fantasses, kerosene oil tins, petrol tins & anything in fact that would hold water. Many, too many, horses were landed – there was very little use for them (except the Mule Corps mentioned before) no room, very little water. Nevertheless for the first fortnight animals continued to stream ashore & it seemed no ones business in the Qtr Master General's department to stop them. The result was that many were killed & the remainder had to be re-embarked & sent back to Lemnos. Numbers of motor cars, too, & transport vehicles were brought from Alexandria to Lemnos, all of which had to be sent back again.

Our "dugouts" were made of earth, sandbags & planks, & at first we lost a number of Officers & men who were hit inside their shelters. However experience soon taught us that cover from view, was not necessarily cover from fire & the overhead cover was then made batter & shrapnel proof. Nothing could be constructed to keep out the shells from the 10" & 14" guns, but for the most part these fell either into the sea, or on the side of the hill.

On 28 April moved into a better "funk hole" with Edwards. Certain amount of shelling which slackened off towards afternoon – more casualties on the beach. Landed the first 2 Battns of the Naval Brigade at 8pm.

29 April... No shells from the enemy after 8am. A quiet day – lot of work done in consequence. Our troops well dug in now & line straightened out. Land 2 more Battns of Naval Division at night.

30 April. Quiet morning. Went off to supply ship "Minnewaska" for Colonel Leslie & self. Embarked Engineers at night for Helles.

1 May. Turks bombarded beach all morning, on & off & evening – several casualties amongst men & animals. Nevertheless managed land a lot of stores during the day.

2 May. Beach shelled all day on & off. Heavy firing by our Naval guns in evening, followed by an advance by our right, & capture of new positions which we were unable to maintain, owing to dead Turks & machine gun fire. Heavy rifle firing all night.

3rd May. Heavy shelling of the bay by enemy. Probably from "Goeben" & forts. Certain number of shells over beach. I start road making round face of hill.

4th May. Quiet day – Road making morning & afternoon – few shells over in afternoon. One killed one man, & wounded four others.

5th May. Beach shelled all morning. Made more roads. Embarked 4,000 Australians & New Zealanders for Cape Helles, finishing at 2.30am, 6th (Thursday).

6th May. Made roads all morning. 2.30 pm enemy shell beach from direction of Kapa Tepe, killing several mules & one Ceylon Planter – Animals all moved off beach up gullies.

7th May. More enfilading of beach from Kapa Tepe. 23 men wounded & 3 killed (including wireless operator) 30 mules & horses killed. Had a narrow escape when unloading India mules from horse boat – got covered with stones & dirt from shell burst.

8th May. Quiet morning – at 4.30pm enemy again enfilade beach – the very devil – 2 men killed, 1 wounded. Several animals killed – sent off 70 wounded animals to ships.

9th May. More enfilading, several casualties in men & animals. Animals not to remain on beach in daytime at all – all watering to be done at night. Unload evening & night. Some enemy trenches captured by not held.

10th May. Enemy shelled southern beach from Kapa Tepe – put shell after shell into point of hill doing little damage, but causing “some excitement” & delaying my work. Must work at night. Quiet day in firing line – stink in trenches awful.

11th May. Unloaded a lot of stuff last night. More shelling of southern point & ordnance stores, little damage done, no-one hit. Work all night & shift ordnance stuff on to lighters out of harms way. Sell for Turks in the morning.

12th May. 8am. landed 1000 Australian Light Horse – very risky performance – certain amount of shelling. Unloaded ordnance stores in safe place. In evening land more Light Horse & embark 1,000 of Naval Division. Glad to see the last of these latter – most awful rabble.

13th May. Quiet day. Embarked 1700 Naval Division for Cape Helles – hope they’ll enjoy them. Finish this 1 am. Hundred men sent to reconnoitre northern point.

14th May. Hundred men return, having found nothing & bagging 3 sheep. Quiet morning. Enemy shelled barges anchored to buoys, & sank one. Very poor shooting – 12 hits out of 100 rounds. Transports all left for Lemnos owing to submarine scare. General Birdwood was slightly wounded in looking over the top of a trench – a broken piece of a rifle bullet grazed the top of his head.

15th May. Beach shelled on & off all day. Embark 62 Zion Mule Corps at night – disembark 90 Indian mules, finish 4 am. General box up of arrangements. General Bridges mortally wounded when walking up Shrapnel Valley, probably by a sniper. Traverses were afterwards built all the way up this valley at intervals & persons passing up & down the valley had to run from traverse to traverse.

16th May. Beach shelled most of day. No casualties to speak of. Disembarked remainder of Indian mules, also ammunition & two 6” howitzers. Got to bed 3.30 am again.

17th May. Up at 7am. to disembark remains of 2nd Brigade from Cape Helles. In afternoon embarked remains of Zion Mule Corps. Captain Villiers Stuart, Indian Army, G.S.O.3 to Genl. Birdwood killed sketching.

A note or two about the trenches.

Digging had commenced as soon as we had the first ridge – our only way of staying there at all was by digging ourselves in as soon as possible. Up to April 29th, the Australians & New Zealanders were digging day & night & by the 29th our line was straightened out & more or less secure. It is interesting to note that really only the type of trench was used, , both as a firing trench & communicating trench – about 6ft deep – 2’6” wide – with earth thrown up behind & in front. In these deep narrow trenches it is impossible to pried over the top of the parapet & loopholes were very little used. The system was, that a look out man was kept at intervals with periscope, & if an attack seemed evident, the men lined the top of the parapet & fired from there. Steps, seats, & shelves were cut in the walls of the trenches where possible. Exactly a similar type of trench was dug behind for communication purposes – this entailed great labour, as in many cases these communication trenches had to be cut through the top of a hill & down the reverse slope, & in many

instances a subway had to be dug across the valley at the bottom, as many of these valleys were swept by Turkish guns & snipers.

In many places our trenches & those of the Turks were only 50 yards apart, & in one place, "Quins Post", considerably less.

The reserves bivouacked on the rear slopes & in those of the valleys that were tolerably free from shellfire. In the day time the troops were withdrawn from these trenches, regular observers being posted with periscopes – the troops for the trenches of course being always kept with easy reach.

The Turkish artillery were very well handled probably by German officers, as were also their machine guns, of which they seem to have a great number & they seem to be of a lighter pattern than ours. The ridges were covered with bushes & scrub which made it very difficult for us to locate their snipers & machine guns. They were always cleverly concealed. We had 18 pounders, 2 batteries of Indian Mountain Guns, 10 pounders & a (*indecipherable*) of 4.7" howitzers. Wee of course wanted many more howitzers. However all our guns did & are doing extraordinarily well, especially the Indian Guns. But they were all hampered by a shortage of ammunition. There were indications that the Turks were short of rifles, but they had plenty of rifle ammunition, & used to keep up a more or less continuous fire all night – quite ineffective & harmless. The shelling of the beach from with big shells was a continuous annoyance to us – not much damage was done after the first few days of this bombardment, as the men learnt to keep out of the way after the first shell came over. It was always the first shell that caused the few casualties that we had. Every day we unloaded rations & forage, so as to keep a supply on shore of at least 7 days complete rations. Sick & wounded were sent out to the hospital ships as they were collected at the two clearing hospitals on the beach.

18 May. Quiet day. We got ready to take up all available men from the beach – unnecessary – attack dies down at 9am. Renewed in the centre & right at 2pm – dies down again 3.30pm. All spare horses & mules sent back to ships. Wire for my recall comes. Colonel Leslie says he will see Birdwood about it.

20 May. Quiet morning. Embark more horses & mules. In the evening enemy advance with white flag followed by large bodies of Turks under cover, with fixed bayonets. This little (*indecipherable*) was luckily discovered & frustrated by a few rifle shots in direction of flag. Half hearted attack followed; renewed early in night. Disembarked more of Light Horse Brigade.

21st May. Went round trenches with Wagstaff & Onslow – stink beastly. Heavy swell in evening breaks up all our piers, as we were disembarking 3rd Light Horse Brigade. Birdwood gives me orders to return to Alexandria as soon as I can.

22nd May. Quiet morning – rain – no disembarking owing to swell. Submarine scare at 12 noon, most of ships up anchor & leave. Torpedo boats patrol up & down. Turkish Bimbashi (*Major*) comes in under flag of truce, to arrange armistice to bury dead. As a matter of fact (or so it was thought) they really wanted the rifles of their dead. Eventually an armistice was arranged for Monday 24th, & they were allowed to collect their dead with their rifles, up to a certain line.

23rd May. Quiet day. Piers repaired, do a lot of unloading - Albion goes ashore, pulled off by "Canopus" under heavy fire – 1 man killed, 7 wounded. I leave in minesweeper, at 10pm for Lemnos. One heard the opinion very freely expressed that the initial mistake of the expedition was the landing of the Australian Army Corps, for far away from the 29th Division as to render active co-operation between the two forces impossible.

24 May. Arrive Mudros (Lemnos) 9am. Transfer to "Aragon" – hear that Italy has come in.

25 May. Transfer to Galeka. Hear of the sinking of the "Triumph". Everyone scared to death by submarines – cold feet everywhere. Sail for Alexandria at 6.30pm.