

Anzac Cove

TURKEY

August 10th 1915.

Dear Mum & Dad,

It has been almost impossible to write you sooner on account of our letters being so strictly censored; even now it is very difficult not to overstep the mark. I don't know whether these letters will be sent straight on to you or whether they will first of all be delayed. At any rate I shall write you once a week in hopes that you will get them.

Well, I suppose the main thing is to let you know how we are all keeping.

We landed in the Dardanelles three months' ago - May 10th - since then we have been taking turns in the trenches fortnight about. Just at present we are down on the beach for a fortnight's holiday.

We all live in dug-outs - holes dug in the ground. These dug-outs protect you from shrapnel. Some of these holes are big enough to hold four or six men, while others are only big enough for one to camp in. At present there are two of us in the one, Bivy, Cobb and myself. It is great sport to see everybody dive for their dug-outs when a shell bursts in the neighbourhood. At present shells are bursting on both sides of us but they are pretty harmless and they are not likely to get at us. I think they are trying to get the Battery just beyond us. I suppose you heard about Bill Overton, Clapham Eric Lynch and Neil Campion. I was close handy and saw all four hit and saw Bill and Neil die. We were all sitting down having

tea on the 26th May; all dog tired after a hard day's sapping. Suddenly, without giving any warning, a shell burst overhead. Altogether it hit eight different men, two of which were Neil Campion and Eric Lynch. It only wounded Eric, but Neil died about ten minutes later. Two of the others that were hit also died (Gange and Somerset) At the time the shell burst five of us were sitting together, and it was a miracle how we other three escaped; pellets hit the bank all round us. The following day only three of our men were hit (Short, Robieson & Cooper) but none very seriously. On the 28th May, Bryant was shot dead by a sniper. Mac.P. and myself went to dig a grave for him but the snipers made it too hot for us and we had to retire to cover; but we succeeded in finishing our job that night.

On the 30th May, we & W.M.R.) took a group of Trenches on what is now known as No. 3. Outpost. The 6th Squad held the Trenches until the following night when they were relieved by the 9th Squadron. During the next day and night the W.M.R. had to fight to keep the trenches but it was no use, the Turks got the upper hand and forced us to retreat back on to the next spur. During this little skirmish, the casualties amounted to 62.

I will give you the names of the killed and wounded in our Troop up to the present. When we left Alexandria the full strength of our troop was 36.

Lieut. Charles Watt - shot dead on edge of Turks trenches

Sgt. Kebbell, Old Boy, shot dead while looking over the edge of the trenches.

Sgt. Mothes, wounded in shoulder.

(3)

Cpl. Clapham	wounded seriously
Denbin	" "
Bourke	" "
Relston	" "
Cole	" "
Lynch	" "
Robieson	" "
Short	" "
Somerset	died of wounds

What with killed, wounded and sick, the troops' strength worked down to 13 men and two non-com's. It was afterwards made up to 30 and is now down to 16 again, so you will see that there is very few of the first lot left; about 10 I think, therefore, 72% of the original troop have left us.

Well I suppose I will have to conclude by letting you know how we are. I saw Mac. yesterday, and he is just a little thinner, but looks quite well. Jim, I don't quite know how he is, he stopped behind with appendicitis, but I shall drop him a note. Capt. Kelsall, Lieut. Somerville, Morrison, Fulton and Tuke are all well. By the way it seems to me that there are a lot of the boys who could come but evidently don't want to. Lionel has, I believe, gone back to N.Z. Roy Lambert was found dead outside our trenches - I wonder if his brother heard about it. I still have that penny and Champagne cork. I also have a Tortoise that I caught two months ago down on the beach. He weighs about 4ozs. and lives on bread and water. I am going to try and bring him home. I am just craving for a decent feed, so you can send stacks of cake and chocolate. Glad you got first parcel, but can't make out where set of Egyptian Spoons and Jar have gone to. I, just like the absent-minded ass I am, have lost both Register tickets.

Thanks for sending on the Auckland Weekly, and I will be only too glad to receive any papers. Not everybody takes the trouble to write - they can't be bothered, and yet they expect me, under the most difficult circumstances, to write them.

Roy said he would send me the Collegian, but it has not arrived yet. I suppose some Old Boy has nipped it. Salmond has gone to Lemnos sick. Let Roy read this letter, there are one or two names he would like to see. Tell him he was next to Keb. when he was hit and I must say he was game right up to the last. He lay, half conscious, from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. in a narrow trench exposed to the burning heat of the sun. It was impossible for us to get him away, as the Turks had practically surrounded us. We got him out that night, when we were relieved, and the stretcher bearers carried him $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the landing, where he was put on the Hospital boat. The next morning they operated but he was too far gone to live and about 24 hours later he died. Several other Old Boys have been killed, but they were before my time. They tell me Bernan is on his way here with the Field Amb.

I am writing this letter so that everybody can read it and so that everybody can reply to it.

I have still got the watch and compass, although they are both out of action; and some honest person got down on the big green rug of mine.

How is everybody keeping. There ought to be a mail before long - I don't know when we shall get out of Turkey. I suppose we won't be relieved until we reach Constant. I see we have just captured Bagdad.

(Sgd R. MacDonell.