

“At last!” Good reason to say so far we had been in the same spot for three months. It was only a bit of a knoll some 500ft high and held by sixty men.

Early one morning a large patrol of the enemy stumbled across it and at that time there were only a dozen holding the place but they held it long enough. After that we were shoved there with our machine guns and although we did considerable damage at various times we were not attacked again. For three weary months we stayed there and every drop of water and every biscuit had to be carried a couple of miles. No one was strong and carrying a 2½ gallon tins of water in each hand through the night up the hill was a veritable nightmare. The daily allowance was two pints per man and the thermometer at 90° in the shade and the only shade we had was an olive grove. Lovely and cool it was there with gentle sea breeze blowing and the lovely Aegean sparkling a short half mile away but – but it was exposed and it meant death, swift and certain to go there in the day time. One or two reckless ones went there to have a rest. They are still there. At Anzac zone was hell unlidged. In England people sometimes say the flies are bad in the summer but then have never been in the East. Small wonder then that there was a general feeling of relief when the news came that there was to be an advance. Our numbers were by that time considerably lessened but nevertheless six were picked out to go in the charge. There was some bad language used about that for there were no reserve men to replace those six if they got outed.

Our job was to wait until the preliminary work was done and then work up to support and rather reinforce the front line.

The front line went out and we followed a little way and took cover behind a low bank of earth and had just got up our spare ammunition when hell broke loose. It was pretty hot for a while and then came a faint cheer and after that comparative quiet for a few minutes and again the din commenced. It was not safe to sit up and one shell could have cleaned out the lot of us yet so tired were the chaps the some slept quite peacefully. Towards midnight there came a rousing cheer and we knew our first line had accomplished its purpose and we picked up our loads and set off. Dozens of wounded met us making their way back to the clearing station and occasionally we heard groans and cries for help come out of the darkness. It was awful having to push out and leave the poor devils but we knew well that we were needed urgently at the firing line, so we left them. The medical chaps attended to them when daylight came.

It took us about an hour to reach our position and when we reached we had to set to work and dig a trench and make a gun table. It was weary work and we were almost exhausted before we started. The ground was so hard that the pick struck fire at every blow and at last we stopped for the very good reason that were absolutely flagged out and how we managed to go without water that day and keep our reason is a marvel. When night came in slipped down to the wells and brought back enough for the next day. It was not clean water nor did it smell nice but it tasted good. Ask anyone who was in the advance of August 6th whether they minded the water being a bit muddy or stale. Now, it is said that Colonials are without discipline. Perhaps they are, but altho’ they were nigh mad with thirst and by boiling the water a certain amount was lost by evaporation yet most obeyed the doctor and did boil it.

About an hour before dawn on the next day we moved out in front to give such covering fire as we could to an attack on the enemy's strongest position some 1800yds distant. They held the crest of steep ridge varying from 900' to 100' high and the reverse slope was very gentle. Our warships bombarded it for a while and then line after line of our fellows swept up. Watching through our telescopes we thought the enemy had ... fled for none of ours seemed to be dropping but just as they reached within less than a hundred the enemy jumped on to their parapets and opened fire. Their fire was grazing that is their bullets were flying low and passed to the slope of the ground. We poured in ... fire but it was like throwing cupfuls of water on a burning house our men went down like crops before a hailstorm. It is doubtful if 5% of that lot returned. In another place the attack was successful, in fact there was practically no opposition. The official report: "the attack on S... B... was partly successful."

While we were firing we had a busy time keeping up a sufficient supply of ammunition and one party had a narrow escape. There were four of them and two were unarmed and in the lead when they suddenly came across a sniper who had somehow managed to escape detection. The two unarmed ones cursed him in several languages and bade him drop his rifle but he couldn't make up his mind whether to shoot or not quick enough and the other two came up and took him prisoner. Needless to say those two never went without their rifles or a heavy revolver after that. Oh! It was a great time that when no matter where one was he was exposed to fire from some direction or other. It sure was a weird life.

The endurance of those chaps was simply wonderful. At home they could put a hundred and fifty pound sack of corn on their shoulders and some could manage two hundred but there, they couldn't lift an eighty pound sandbag on to the parapet and yet they carried a twenty pound box of ammunition in either each hand, sometimes for a mile. On paper it does not seem much but it must be remembered that it was very rough ground almost covered with short scrub and they had to run not only because they were being fired on but also because ammunition was badly needed, nor was there only the one trip to be made but half a dozen. Then at night when behind the fire trench when they were too tired to make a proper dugout – an hours had toil – bullets would be "phutt-ing" "into the ground close by and every now and again would go the call "stretcher bearers!" "For God's sake pass the word for the stretcher-bearers" and other such appeals. It was very trying for the nerves but fortunately breakdowns were unknown.

It was pretty rotten work taking it all round. It was not even interesting after a time and was no tale of glorious deeds (or at least we did not see any glory in it at the time although were mighty proud of it now) it was simply a case of damned hard work under a red hot sun and legions of flies pestering one from sunrise until sunset. Certainly it was exciting in a way for one never knew when a shell or bullet was going to hit him but that soon ceased to be exciting in the weariness that was on everyone (but for that matter this is or should be ... exciting for a bomb may be dropped on one any nights, and yet to find it awfully dull. Let me finish this so quickly as possible. I said I'd write about it and so I'll summon all my remain patience and do so) One day our general told us we had a bit of trench to take and that perhaps we'd get a holiday and we'd have earned one if we took it. There were very very few of us left and all those were more or less sick and yet we hadn't earned a holiday! And we'd always done more than was asked of us! Well the attack was only partly successful and a week later we made another attack. We moved out late in the afternoon and before evening we had the last of the reserves up. Bombs were a bit scare and the word was

continually passed for more. Heavens! That was exciting! Shells half burying us and dazing us with the concussion, the trench encumbered with killed and wounded, blood everywhere.

One corner there was where nearly everyone got wounded for we had to pass it and a sniper had marked it. There was wounded man just round it and we had to tramp on his legs for there was nowhere to shift him and we simply had to get the gun up to the first trench. ...! But that sure was some shindig and the cried for bombs! The memory of that afternoon won't leave for a long time. About two hours before midnight we had to .. a pretty brisk attack and then we snatched a bite and drink before the next and were just in the thick of it when I was just out of action but it also was stopped. Hooray! I've finished. 7/520 Spr. J.Clunies-Ross MGS 9/4/16 [signature]