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Prime Minister's Department,
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THE following report, which has been received from the official press representative with the Australian Expeditionary Force in connexion with the landing of the troops on the Gallipoli Peninsula, is published for general information.

ANDREW FISHER,
Prime Minister.

Gallipoli (One).—The Australians and Maorilanders landed in two bodies, the first being a covering force to seize the ridges around the landing place, the second and main body to begin the landing about an hour later. The moon that night set about an hour and a half before daylight. This just gave time for the warships and transports of the covering force to steam in and land the troops before dawn.

It had long been known that the Third Australian Brigade, consisting of Queenslanders, South Australians, Western Australians, and Tasmanians, had been chosen to make the landing. This brigade consists largely of miners from the Broken Hill and Westralian gold-fields. It had left Egypt many weeks before the rest of the force, and had landed on Lemnos Island, where the troops were thoroughly practised at landing from ships and boats. During the second week in April the greater part of the Australian and New Zealand troops from Egypt followed, and had been just a fortnight in Lemnos when they sailed to effect a landing at a certain position on the northern shore of Gallipoli Peninsula, about 60 miles away.

The covering force was taken partly in four of our own transports, partly in three battleships. The night was perfect; about three o'clock the moon set, and the ships carrying the troops, together with the three warships which were charged with the protection of the flanks, stole in towards the high coastline. It was known that the coast was fortified, and that a battery on a promontory 2 miles southwards, and several other guns amongst the hills inland covered the landing place. The battleships and transports took up a position in two lines. The troops were transferred partly to the warships' boats, and partly to destroyers, which hurried in shore, and re-transferred their occupants to boats, which then made by the shortest route for the beach.

It was eighteen minutes past four on the morning of Sunday, 25th April, when the first boat grounded. So far not a shot had been fired by the enemy. Colonel McLagan's orders to his brigade were that shots, if possible, were not to be fired till daybreak, but the

business was to be carried through with the bayonet. The men leapt into the water, and the first of them had just reached the beach when fire was opened on them from the trenches on the foothills which rise immediately from the beach. The landing place consists of a small bay about half-a-mile from point to point with two much larger bays north and south. The country rather resembles the Hawkesbury River country in New South Wales, the hills rising immediately from the sea to 600 feet. To the north these ridges cluster to a summit nearly 1,000 feet high. Further northward the ranges become even higher. The summit just mentioned sends out a series of long ridges running south-westward, with steep gullies between them, very much like the hills and gullies about the north of Sydney, covered with low scrub very similar to a dwarfed gum tree scrub. The chief difference is that there are no big trees, but many precipices and sheer slopes of gravel. One ridge comes down to the sea at the small bay above mentioned, and ends in two knolls about 100 feet high, one at each point of the bay. It was from these that fire was first opened on the troops as they landed. Bullets struck fireworks out of the stones along the beach. The men did not wait to be hit, but wherever they landed they simply rushed straight up the steep slopes. Other small boats which had cast off from the warships and steam launches which towed them, were digging for the beach with oars. These occupied the attention of the Turks in the trenches, and almost before the Turks had time to collect their senses, the first boatloads were well up towards the trenches. Few Turks awaited the bayonet. It is said that one huge Queenslander swung his rifle by the muzzle, and, after braining one Turk, caught another and flung him over his shoulder. I do not know if this story is true, but when we landed some hours later, there was said to have been a dead Turk on the beach with his head smashed in. It is impossible to say which battalion landed first, because several landed together. The Turks in the trenches facing the landing had run, but those on the other flank and on the ridges and gullies still kept up a fire upon the boats coming in shore, and that portion of the covering force which landed last came under a heavy fire before it reached the beach. The Turks had a machine gun in the valley on our left, and this seems to have been turned on to the boats containing part of the Twelfth Battalion. Three of these boats are still lying on the beach some way to the north. Wounded men lay in them two days before they could be rescued. Two stretcher-bearers of the Second Battalion who went along the beach during the day to effect a rescue were both shot by the Turks. Finally, a

party waited for dark, and crept along the beach, rescuing nine men who had been in the boats two days, afraid to move for fear of attracting fire. The work of the stretcher-bearers all through a week of hard fighting has been beyond all praise.

The Third Brigade went over the hills with such dash that within three quarters of an hour of landing some had charged over three successive ridges. Each ridge was higher than the last, and each party that reached the top went over it with wild cheers. Since that day the Turks have never attempted to face our bayonets. The officers led magnificently, but, of course, nothing like an accurate control of the attack was possible. Subordinate leaders had been trained at Mena to act on their own responsibility, and the benefit of this was enormously apparent in this attack. Companies and platoons, little crowds of 50 to 200 men, were landed wherever the boats took them. Their leaders had a general idea of where they were intended to go, and once landed, each subordinate commander made his way there by what seemed to him to be the shortest road. The consequence was that the Third Brigade reached its advanced line in a medley of small fractions inextricably mixed. Several further lines of Turkish trenches were swept through. On the further ridges the Turks did not wait for the bayonet, and when at sunrise ships bringing the first portion of the main body arrived and steamed slowly through the battleships to disembark the men, those on board could see figures on the skyline of the ridges near them, and on a further ridge inland. Presently a heliograph winked from near the top of the second hill. They were our men. They could be seen walking about and digging just as you see them any morning at Liverpool Camp during annual training. The relief which flooded the hearts of thousands of anxious watchers on the ships can be better imagined than described.

It is impossible so say exactly how many of the enemy were holding this particular portion of the coast; perhaps 500 to 1,000. They retired for an hour. During that welcome spell the men who had seized the ridges were able to do something towards entrenching. Meantime the main body had already begun to arrive on the beach. It was possible to land these troops in comparative calm, interrupted only by shells from a Turkish battery to the south. This sprayed with shrapnel the boats as they came from the ships, but managed to hit very few. One boat, just as it landed, had the bottom blown out without a single man in it being hurt. Our men landed in very heavy kits and an accident in the boats might have been serious. It is believed that some men were drowned in one or two boats of the covering force, but, except for these, the hundreds of boats which came to that beach under shell fire during the day suffered scarcely at all.

By the time the first part of the main body was forming up on the beach the Turks had brought up their troops from the other side of the peninsula, and a fierce attack began, which lasted all day. As fresh troops arrived on the beach they were in most cases sent straight into the firing line, either on one flank or the other of the covering force. These troops went straight into the firing line, where the Turks were already attacking in force too great to allow of the digging of trenches. The only possibility was to hold on in the scrub on the line which they wished to hold and dig in after dark.

It was in that first afternoon that the Australians and later the New Zealanders, obtained their first experience of shrapnel in this war. During the first day, when they had rushed a position which was rather like a section of the Blue Mountains, full of winding gullies, it was naturally difficult to discover the position of all the enemy's guns. Those on a promontory to the south were soon placed. Three were silenced almost at once by a cruiser which put her nose round one side of the point, whilst a battleship shelled from the other side. One gun there, however, continued to fire most of the afternoon, but was hit before sundown, and has not fired since. But there was a battery in the ranges inland which during the whole afternoon it was impossible to place. From 2 o'clock until sundown it fired continuously a salvo of four shells about twice every minute on to the ridges which our troops were holding, for the most part without any protection. Some of them were in a deserted Turkish trench, of which the Turks had the exact range. Hour after hour one watched shrapnel bursting over the flank ridge, along which the infantry were lying. The Navy could do practically nothing to help, because we could not tell them where to fire. The first relief was when a small force of Indian mountain artillery, which landed with us, managed to drag its guns into position just behind a part of our line, which was suffering especially, and began firing salvos over their heads in the direction from which shells were coming. The mere sound of our own guns answering the enemy's came like a draught of fresh water to the infantry. Of course, our guns drew the enemy's shrapnel on to themselves like a magnet, and many in the firing

line around them were saying, "It's those guns that's bringing it this way." I heard one of our men say, "They're doing blooming good work, anyway." It would not have mattered whether the mountain guns were doing good work or not. The mere sound of them was sufficient. One of the British officers who was out in an exposed position observing for this battery was hit through the cheek, the bullet taking away all his teeth on one side of his mouth. He went down to the beach, had the wound dressed, and returned to his post.

During the whole of this trying time if one thing cheered the men more than another it was the behaviour of their officers. I saw one officer in charge of a machine gun who one knew for certain must be killed if the fight lasted. His men were crouching under cover of a depression a few inches deep on the brow of the hill. He himself was sitting calmly on top of the rise searching for targets through his glasses. Presently three or four salvos of shrapnel burst right over that group, ending with a round of common shell with its terrifying flash and scatter of loose earth. A shout came from somewhere in the rear, "Pass the word to retire!" The officer turned round. "Where does that order come from?" he asked, sharply. "Passed up from the rear, sir," was the answer. "Well, pass back and find out who gave it," said the officer. "Yes, who says retire?" said several of the men. This was done, and next moment the order came up, "Line to advance and entrench on forward slope of the hill." There was a moment's delay in gathering up rifles, and then over the hill they went. Dusk was just falling, and the enemy's battery happened at that moment to switch off in order to fire a few last salvos towards the beach. The officer in question was there at his post next morning, when it became necessary to send a man down the hill on some business. Before the man had gone 20 yards he was wounded. The officer walked down the hill at once to pick him up. Within a couple of seconds the Turks had a machine gun trained on to him and he fell, riddled with bullets.

Australia has lost many of her best officers in this way. The toll has been really heavy, but the British theory is that you cannot lead men from the rear, at any rate, in an attack of this sort. It would be absurd to pretend that the life of an officer like that one was wasted. No one knows how long his example will live on amongst men. There were others, whom I will mention later on when the casualties have all reached Australia, who died fighting like tigers, some who fully knew they would die. One was sometimes inclined to think this sort of leading useless, but none who heard the men talking next day could doubt its value. "By God! our officers were splendid," one Australian told me. Wherever I went I heard the same opinion expressed.

During the night our lines were straightened. Men dug themselves in as best they could. The Turks attempted several charges on the extreme right. A charge was generally preceded by a cessation of firing; then could be heard arguments between Turkish officers and men going on just over the edge of the hill—just such arguments as used to take place whenever you tried to superintend natives loading a cart at Mena Camp. Finally, over the ridge would come a line of figures, shouting "Allah! Allah!" Our troops waited till the enemy were within about 70 yards, then jumped out of the trench with bayonets fixed, and charged. The Turks have never once waited, but so far have always turned immediately, or flung themselves flat and allowed the machine guns to fire over their heads at our men.

By morning our line was well dug in. Water had been sent up during the night by every possible means, chiefly in petrol tins carried on donkeys, mules, or by hand. Stores were constantly arriving on the beach from the huge fleet of transports, until the place looked like a great busy port. Some of the New Zealanders were caught during the night out in the open by a machine gun, and lost many of their number.

The Turks are well trained; German methods and orders have certainly been given to the men in the trenches by strangers—possibly in the scrub near the trenches—who give the order in perfect English and manage to get it passed along the trench. I have seen, personally, one clear example of this.

There has been hard fighting since, which I will report later. I would have reported before if I had been able to obtain leave from the Admiralty. When all is said, however, the feat which will go down to history is that first Sunday's fighting, when three Australian brigades stormed, in the face of fire, tier after tier of cliffs and mountains apparently as impregnable as Govett's Leap. The sailors who saw the Third Brigade go up those heights and over successive summits like a whirlwind, with wild cheers and bayonets flashing, speak of it with tears of enthusiasm. The New Zealanders are just as generous in appreciation. It is hard to distinguish between the work of the brigades. They all fought fiercely and suffered heavily, but, considering that they performed last Sunday a feat which is fit to rank beside the battle of the Heights of Abraham, their losses are not heavier than must be expected. I believe the British

at Cape Hellas fought a tremendous fight. Of the Australians, it may be said that the Australian Infantry, and especially the Third Brigade, has made a name which will never die. Around me as I write the guns of half-a-dozen warships are shaking the hills. The evening is an exquisite one. From the ridges above comes the continuous rattle of musketry. As no bullets are whistling overhead, the firing must be by our men. The issue cannot be in doubt, but one knows that, even if it were, nothing could take away from the Australian and New Zealand Infantry the fame of last Sunday's fighting.

Gallipoli (Two).—On Monday, the second day of landing, the enemy again pumped shrapnel on to the ridges. Also they must have fired 600 shells at the landing place, scarcely hitting any one. The shells on the ridges were far worse, but this time the battleship *Queen Elizabeth* was sent to support us. During the morning the effect of her shells was like a tonic to our tired men. Huge yellow clouds burst from her side; some seconds later came a crash as if the sky had fallen in, followed almost immediately by a tremendous roar somewhere on land. Looking in the direction of the Turkish position you saw a vast cloud of earth and green smoke rise skyward. The *Queen Elizabeth* had been provided with monstrous shrapnel sent out specially for this job. The shell weighs nearly a ton, and, bursting, leaves in the air not merely the little puff of ordinary shrapnel, but a miniature thundercloud.

Early on the second morning, the Eighth Australian Infantry repelled four Turkish charges. The Fourth Infantry made a most gallant attack with the bayonet and drove the Turks back through the scrub until they came on the Turkish camp. The Ninth and Tenth went straight through that until faced by three machine guns in position further back, and came under fire of a battery. This battalion was afterwards ordered to retire somewhat, as the position was difficult to support. The Turks next attacked the left and right of the Third Brigade. The fire of the *Queen Elizabeth* and that of the other warships soon settled the fate of the former attack, but, in the latter case, the fierce fire of the machine guns sweeping down the ridge, which was peculiarly exposed to shrapnel fire, proved too trying for the battalion holding it. There had been no opportunity of digging trenches at this spot, the fire being too hot. The battalion had been put straight into this nasty corner immediately after arrival, and was subjected to a heavy strain. For the time, the ridge was left almost clear of our troops, and the Turks began to creep up to the edge of it almost in the rear of the Third Brigade. This was towards evening, and the Third Brigade had been in the trenches continuously fighting, many of the men without any food. Every man brought ashore with him three days' rations, but in the fierce rush up the hillside on Sunday morning, many had left their packs behind. On Monday afternoon, an endeavour was made to take some battalions of this brigade out of the trenches to rest and collect such portions as were scattered through the firing line. Part of the Ninth and Tenth were waiting down the valley at the rear when the Turks began to take this ridge. There was nothing for it but to send the tired Ninth and Tenth to take the ridge again. I saw that advance from a few hundred yards away. First, one very gallant officer of the retreating regiment came through the scrub collecting odds and ends of his battalion from the hollows and waving them forward. Standing up all the time, he succeeded in rallying a few men and leading them forward several hundred yards. There the effort rested, but I saw this particular officer several times later running up and down

in the firing line in his macintosh, hopping over the scrub amidst a deadly fire when every other living thing upon that plateau was flat upon its face. Presently up came the Ninth and Tenth line after line. In very good lines of twenty or thirty they went through the scrub, rushing for all they were worth, dropping every hundred yards or so to take breath, then up again and on towards the end of the ridge. About three rushes covered it; they were facing shrapnel and machine guns, but reached the required position. Three times they were driven off the ridge, and three times they came and took it. The last time they remained there. When the Brigadier asked them afterwards what they wanted to go and retire for, "Well, we retired in very good line, sir," said one stalwart, grinning. "And so they did, the beggars," added the Brigadier. Just after the two battalions had begun their first charge across this hill, an order was passed along the trenches to a point where the writer was. "Pass along order to cease fire; the British are getting round at the back of the Turks, and there is a fear of hitting them." Some of the men ceased firing automatically; but the officers around me questioned the order. "Where does the order come from?" they asked. This was passed down, and presently the answer came back. "Order from General Head-quarters to cease firing. The French and Indians are within 2 miles at the back of the Turks. We are afraid of hitting them." Our officers knew there were no French nor Indians, and the British were believed to be at least 10 miles away. "Take no notice of that order," was passed along; but, before the firing could be begun again, the Turks had two or three minutes during which they could raise their heads with impunity to fire among our undefended men. Exactly the same trick was played in another part of the line two hours earlier. The experience of a very few days has put officers and men wise to these ruses.

There was little or no rest for the men in the trenches on Monday night, and, on Tuesday, the fighting was still heavy in parts. Between Tuesday and Thursday, however, it was at last possible for the tired troops who had gone up the hills that first Sunday morning and had been fighting hard ever since, to be relieved and sent down to rest in camp. This was the first time that any estimate could be made of the losses of men and officers. Some supposed to be dead or wounded turned up safe and sound from various parts of the line where they were mixed in with other battalions. The tired men almost all enjoyed a bathe during the hours of the afternoon, and for a time the beach in the midst of the fiercest battle ever fought in the Dardanelles looked more like Manly on a bank holiday. Hundreds of men were bathing together, while out in the roadstead nine or ten warships were constantly firing salvos from huge guns. Along the sunny shore were men diving, splashing, and enjoying sunbaths. Occasionally shrapnel would flicker up the water, but very few men were hit—only one, as far as I know was killed during the whole day whilst bathing, an accident which had not the least effect on the bathers, who might just as easily have been killed ashore.

Practically all our men have now had a rest of a day, and have gone back to the trenches. They are attacked somewhere every night. For example, there was a Turkish attack; the Turks did not reach the trenches, and the dead were lying thick on the ground this morning. To-day they attacked at another part of the line, came within 50 yards—but none got nearer, for the machine gun mowed them down. Twenty or so can be seen lying within a small space.

