

Title:

“The Story of Two Campaigns”

Official war history of the Auckland Mounted Rifles Regiment, 1914 - 1919 in the Battlefields of Gallipoli, Sinai and Palestine during WWI.

by **Sergt. C. G. Nicol**

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Sergt. C. G. Nicol....“Let us remember that the men who died on those bullet-swept ridges in a vain effort, did not die in vain. They passed in their greatest hour, and they left an example that will never die. For many a hearth-side there was no consolation at the time; sorrow and a bitter sense of loss shrouded the view. But for the nation, and afterwards for the kin of the men who died, there was the goodly gift of a noble example, an inspiration which may be a moving power to generations yet unborn.”

The Story of Two Campaigns.

CHAPTER I.

Birth of the Regiment.

When the Great War broke out in August, 1914, New Zealand "leapt to arms unbidden." For her "The Day" had come. But it was not "The Day" the Germans had toasted. The people of New Zealand were peacefully inclined. They had not been taught to regard war as a necessity. They had come to a promised land, a land that might be the home of a nation, and all they desired was the opportunity to possess it. True, a system of compulsory military training was in operation, but for home defence only. It was merely a preparation against any possible invader. But at the challenge of militarism to civilisation, the Dominion sprang to arms. The day had come when she was to prove her loyalty to King and Empire, when she was to assume the burden of a free nation within the Empire, when she was to show to the world that Britons of the most distant Dominion were the bone and flesh and blood of the Motherland. Britain's menace was her menace. Her sons were Britain's sons. Her offer to help to the limit of her power, was as inevitable and as certain as the rising of the sun. Within a few days of the declaration of war, the Mother Country had accepted New Zealand's offer of aid, and men of peace clamoured in their thousands to enrol. Never did fiery cross on Highland hill stir the fighting blood of the clans-men as did the call for men stir the soul of young New Zealand.

There was no need to make the call an appeal. The problem of the military authorities during those fateful days of August was not to get men, but to get them slowly enough. It was in this atmosphere of martial ardour and patriotism that the Auckland Mounted Rifles Regiment had its birth. It lacked the advantage of tradition, but its augury was bright.

In speaking of the birth of the Regiment, there is no desire or intention to belittle the value of the three Territorial units of mounted rifles in the Auckland Military District. From these territorial regiments—the 3rd Auckland Mounted Rifles, the 4th Waikato Mounted Rifles, and the 11th North Auckland Mounted Rifles—the Auckland Mounted Rifles of the Main Body of the N.Z.E.F. was officered and supplied with the majority of its noncommissioned officers; its three squadrons were drawn almost entirely from the districts of the three territorial units, whose names they took; but in composition, the three squadrons had practically no resemblance to the territorial units of the same names. They had an entirely distinct individuality, and thus the A.M.R. of the N.Z.E.F. can be said to have come into being at the mobilisation of August, 1914.

No unit under the compulsory territorial training system, with its 18 to 25 years age limitation, could possibly hope to attain to the average standard of the rank and file of the A.M.R. with whom this history deals. The physique of the men was splendid, and from the colonial mode of life they inherited the initiative and resource which make for high military talent. But no regiment of the force contained so many types and represented so many widely-divergent walks in civil life. There were lawyers and school-masters and students; there were bushmen and farmers and stockmen; there were tradesmen and labourers and clerks; one single tent in the Epsom camp included a schoolmaster, a barber, a coach driver, an accountant, a carpenter, a farm labourer, a commercial traveller, a farmer, and a lawyer. But a rare spirit of comradeship grew up within a few days in tents, in troops, and in squadrons, and so was born the Spirit of the Regiment which became more and more a living reality as the weeks and months went by, and flourished in glorious maturity on the crags and crests of Gallipoli, along the desert ways of Sinai, and throughout the waterless tracts of Palestine, where was enacted the last and greatest crusade. It was the spirit of the men who, upon the out-break of hostilities, travelled fast from far back stations by horse and coach and launch and train to be "in time for the war"; it was the spirit which gave the last drop of water; the spirit which does not know when it is exhausted nor when it is beaten. It was the spirit of Kipling's "If"—"If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew.

"To serve your turn long after they are gone
"And to hold on when there is nothing in you
"Except the will which says to them 'Hold on!'"

Within a few days of the call for volunteers, the three squadrons of the Regiment were practically complete, and had commenced training at Epsom Camp, with Lieutenant-Colonel C. E. R. Mackesy in command. Of this officer's distinguished record more will be said later, but something of his character and personality should now be given, because it was largely due to the out-standing qualities of the commander that the Regiment owed its sound and thorough foundations. A tall commanding figure, Lieutenant-Colonel Mackesy was then a man of 54 years, therefore many years over military age so far as it applied to the rank and file. He was a man of wide learning and experience, and there were few men in the Dominion who at that time realised how tremendous the conflict was to be. He was not of those who spoke so hopefully of the "Russian steamroller," and how speedily it was going to roll up the eastern armies of Germany. It was not surprising, therefore, that the training he prescribed was hard and intensive. The featherbed soldier had nothing to hope if he found himself under Colonel Mackesy. It need hardly be said, also, that the commanding officer was a strict disciplinarian, but he had no need for a detention barracks, the most dreaded punishment for serious default being to strike the offender's name from the roll. Hundreds of men were waiting to step into every vacancy, so a remarkably high standard of discipline prevailed. It was a unique method of punishment and one of the few occasions it could be practised. It was a modern translation of Shakespeare's lines:-

"He which hath no stomach to this fight,
"Let him depart, his passport shall be made."

Actually, however, a regiment composed of the first volunteers for war has few men of the serious defaulter type, and orderly room appearances were rare, and this continued to be the case with the A.M.R. throughout the whole period of hostilities.

Second in command was Major Chapman, an officer who was to die almost at the beginning of his war service. Hale fellow well met, he won the respect of the men, and they were stern critics. As adjutant the Regiment had Captain Wood, N.Z.S.C., a highly efficient officer. The Regiment was fortunate in its squadron commanders—Major Tattersall of the 4th, Major McCarroll of the 11th, and Major Schofield of the 3rd. All possessed the confidence of their men, many of whom were their personal friends in civil life. So it came about that a very happy family sort of feeling prevailed—so much so that officers and troopers sometimes found themselves on the point of addressing each other by their Christian names. Similarly, the happiest relations existed between the troopers and the junior officers.

In dealing with these days when the Regiment was in the making, the work of the sergeant-majors must not be overlooked. All, except one, had come from the Imperial Army. In inculcating a sense of discipline, and in grounding the men in the elementals, these soldiers performed a service of untold value. To illustrate the rawness, in the military sense, of some of the recruits who were so soon moulded into soldiers, an incident of the Epsom parade might be related. One of the frivolities of the moment was for a tent to “count out” another tent in unison. This bright morning one of the sergeant-majors was teaching a few elementary truths to a squad of men who had never been drilled in their lives before. He told them how to “number,” and then gave the word of command. All went well until the tenth man was reached, and he, quite unconscious of the enormity of his offence, serenely shouted, “Out.” The face of the gallant S.M. was a study, and the homily he delivered is historical.

The matter of the greatest importance in the equipping of a regiment of mounted rifles is the provision of horses, and it was a day of tremendous anxiety for the men when remounts were issued. For days horses had been arriving at the remount depot from many destinations. The pick of the animals had already been earmarked for the officers, but it was not generally known that all the “old soldiers,” who had learned wisdom in South Africa, had paid secret visits to the depot and had noted good animals against the day of issue. Some, in fact, had gone the length of tying small pieces of twine to the tails to aid them in quickly recognising the animals when the descent was made upon them. But on the fateful day, alas, it was not a case of “who finds, keeps.” Instead, the remounts were led round in a ring while the troop leaders were given alternate choices; and so it happened that neither the wise ones of South Africa nor the innocents from the pavements and the bush, were allotted the chargers of their choice, and loud were the lamentations. The only cheerful ones were those who had brought their own horses to camp, the instructions being that such horses, provided they were passed by the veterinary officer, were to remain in the possession of the old masters. At that time there were few who were inclined to enthuse over the horses. Even allowing for the usual effects of winter, there was still a look of roughness about the horses, and they were anything but uniform in stamp. Quite a number of the animals seemed to have been badly broken, if broken at all, and generally there was not the appearance of quality one would expect to see in a collection of remounts purchased for war service. One man, a veteran too, rejoiced in a beast which obviously had relations in the kingdom of heavy Clydesdales. She suffered from strangles, and he called her Saucy Kate. Yet events proved that these same horses, excluding Saucy Kate and one or two like her, were the horses which survived the seven weeks’ voyage to Egypt, standing all the way, and afterwards carried the bulk of the men through the desert campaign, beating the Arab horses at their own game. Many of these same horses did stretches of 50 and 60 hours without water in that torrid country, and ended their earthly career, after the final surrender of the Turks, at the hands of their own masters, who chose to take this heart-breaking course rather than risk their gallant four-footed comrades falling into the hands of cruel owners and ending their days in slavery.

The only men who evinced alarm about the equestrian qualifications of the troopers were the S.Ms. who had come from the Imperial cavalry. It was quite impossible for them to teach the men a real cavalry “seat”—their only failure—and they were heard to lament over the “loose of the troopers.” “You might be able to on,” remarked one of the instructors one but I wouldn’t say you could ride.” However all differences on the question of riding were gradually smoothed out, the troopers admitting that the cavalry style was no doubt pretty, and the instructors at last agreeing that the colonial style was much more effectual than it looked.

The days of August slipped quickly by, and September’s days rapidly multiplied, and still there was no definite news of the departure of the Force. Fits of great depression occasionally swept over the A.M.R. owing to fears that colonial troops would not be considered efficient for modern war, that the war would be over before the New Zealand force could get anywhere, that garrison duty in some inglorious spot would be their portion, and so on and so on. Little did the men dream of the great tasks they would be called on to perform, and the laurels that they or their successors were to bring home. Veterans now smile at these anxieties of former days, but none the less they are a little proud of the spirit from which those anxieties arose.

At last, however, orders came for embarkation, which was carried out at Queen’s Wharf, Auckland, on September 22, the bulk of the Regiment going to the Waimana along with the Auckland Infantry, and the balance on the Star of India with the New Zealand Medical Corps. The horses were divided between the two transports. A great crowd assembled to see the vessels draw out into the stream. On the evening of the following day the transports sailed with the small third class cruiser H.M.S. Philomel as escort. A course for the north was set, the orders being that the ships should join the other eight, with the Wellington, Canterbury, and Otago sections of the Force, in the Tasman Sea. To the astonishment of most of those on board, however, the two transports were reentering the Auckland Harbour at daylight next morning.

It was afterwards learned that the recall had been issued owing to the presence in Southern Pacific waters of the German cruisers Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, which could have sunk the whole of the then available escort without running any risk themselves.

In a somewhat depressed frame of mind, the Regiment disembarked three days later. Two squadrons proceeded to Otahuhu and one to Takapuna, where training was resumed until a more powerful escort was obtained. Three long weeks were so spent. On October 10 the Regiment again embarked without any warning, all except one troop being accommodated on the Star of India. On the evening of the following day the two ships, with H.M.S. Philomel escorting, steamed out of the Waitemata to join the rest of the convoy at Wellington. How memorable an event was that final departure! 'Ashore vast crowds, held by emotions too deep for expression, watched the moving ships get under way. The great dread laid its cold fingers on the hearts of the women, even if some stay-at-home men loudly scoffed at the idea of these soldiers ever getting to the war, which, of course, was then against Germany and Austria alone. It was well for the city and the relatives of the men that the extent of what the sacrifice was to be was not then realised. It was well that no one could know that within a few short months fully one-fifth of those cheering young men of the Auckland Mounted and Infantry were to give their lives in the cause of humanity, and that almost all the remaining four-fifths were to suffer wounds or the health wrecking sickness of the Gallipoli campaign. With their splendid band playing the song of the immortal "Contemptibles" of France "It's a Long Way to Tipperary" the men of the A.M.R. took their last farewell of home, and set out on the Great Adventure. The glorious confidence of youth possessed them, an intense patriotism mingled with a keen sense of adventure fired their blood, and a determination to be worthy of the land they represented, shone like a guiding star. These emotions were not openly displayed, however. Then and always the A.M.R. assumed a pose of amused indifference which some of our Allies could never understand.

Wellington was reached on October 14, some hours after the arrival of H.M.S. Minotaur and the Japanese warship Ibuki, which were the adequate additions to the escort. No shore leave was granted to the Auckland men, although it is rumoured that several of them, wearing the uniform of ship's engineers, walked down the gang-way to waiting launches and enjoyed good cheer ashore for the last time. Failing the chance of a trip on shore, one of the Regiment's jesters assisted with great alacrity in the loading of stores, hoping that his evil designs might be rewarded. The best "loot" he could get was a ease of plug tobacco—but it was not tobacco. Only horse shoe nails were to be seen when the case was opened with great mystery in a dark corner.

At 6 a.m. on October 16, the grey-painted transports, escorted by the warships Minotaur, Psyche, Philomel, and Ibuki, sailed for an unknown destination. It was an event which marks an epoch in the history of New Zealand. It might, indeed, be said that on the day when the Dominion's Main Body Force of 9,000 men sailed to the aid of the Motherland, she achieved nation-hood. It was the first great expression of her Imperial obligations, and although her war effort was to reach the then undreamed of total of nearly 100,000 men, it was no mean achievement to despatch within two months of the acceptance of the offer of aid, an equipped force of 9,000 men.

CHAPTER II.

The Voyage to Egypt.

The voyage to Egypt, a destination not then dreamed of, need not be described in any great detail. The first port of call was Hobart, where the troops received an overwhelming welcome, which contrasted with the somewhat restrained farewell the Auckland men had received in their own city. It was realised, however, that the kindly and demonstrative people of Hobart were able to greet the New Zealanders as a compliment to a neighbouring Dominion, and without the personal emotions which must always subdue those who are sending their own kin to war. The Aucklanders were later to realise through their contact with Australian soldiers that the Australians are much more demonstrative people than the people of their own land, and that Australian crowds always give freer reign to their emotions than do gatherings of New Zealanders. This difference in temperament was markedly noticeable between Australian and New Zealand regiments. In action it was observed that the Australians always made more noise than the New Zealanders. Often Australian units, when desperately engaged with the enemy, shouted like a crowd of football barrackers. This was not usually the case with the New Zealanders. When at grips with the enemy they were comparatively quiet, and they fought with a grim determination never underestimating their foe.

Leaving Hobart the New Zealand convoy sailed to Albany, where were waiting 26 of the 28 transports of the Main Body of the Australian Imperial Force. It was a wonderful and inspiring sight to see this fleet lying at anchor across the placid waters of King George's Sound, and it afforded very tangible proof of the loyalty of the Dominions, which had been questioned by the German Emperor. Although there was no opportunity for the Australians and their kinsmen from this side of the Tasman Sea to fraternise during the two days spent at Albany, the feelings of mutual esteem which now exist had their beginnings there. Ships greeted ships, and loud and continuous cries of welcome floated across the water. The secret of the atmosphere, which produced common concord among the ships, was that there was mutual understanding, a common impulse having actuated the men, whether from the Never Never or Sydney or Taupo or Timaru.

On Sunday, November 1, the fleet sailed, the Australian cruisers Sydney and Melbourne taking the places of the smaller "P" class ships, which cheered the New Zealand transports on their way as they parted company. The first transport moved towards the open sea at 6 a.m., and the last did not up anchor until 9 o'clock. Next day the remaining two Australian transports from Fremantle joined the convoy, making the total 38, certainly the largest convoy that ever set out on so long a voyage. Although the Australian ships steamed in three hues, with the New Zealand vessels in two lines at their rear, the great fleet stretched almost from horizon to horizon even when sailing orders were being strictly obeyed. Only sailors could understand fully the technical difficulties attending the sailing of so large a convoy, consisting as it did of such a variety of steamers of so varied engine power.

The days, growing warmer and warmer, followed one another with eventless monotony. As is always the case with mounted troops at sea, the men of the Auckland Mounted Rifles spent most of their time among their horses, which required constant attention. The detachment on the Waimana had a particularly hard time, seeing that on that ship they had much more than their complement of horses. Apart from the ordinary duties in feeding and grooming the horses and cleaning the stalls, it was necessary to take a great deal of care of the animal's legs, which were very liable to swell owing to the constant standing. Frequent rubbing and hosing with salt water was carried out with wonderful results. For those not on duty among the horses, ordinary guard duties were found, and on the Star of India occasional parties were required to transfer coal from a forward hold to the bunkers, bunker space having been reduced by two bunker compartments being used for mess rooms for the men. Incidentally it might be mentioned that in the tropics these mess rooms, being so close to the engine room, became almost unbearably hot, and eating was far from pleasant. Men began to discard one garment after another, until at last some arrived at meals wearing little more than the "uniform" of Gunga Din. Then had to be issued the famous order forbidding men to go about the ship in "a nude state." The man who asked the sergeant-major if he would be regarded as nude if he wore a full bathing suit instead of trunks only, received the fright of his career. The trooper there upon wrote a letter to a troopship paper that was being produced, suggesting that it was hardly proper for the ship's hose to be left uncovered on the deck in full view of the public gaze.

It was patent to everyone that the destination was somewhere north of the Line, but no one except, perhaps, the commander had any more definite information. This uncertainty appealed to the sporting instincts of one trooper who started a "book" on the hazard. He wrote down some 10 possible destinations, including India and Zanzibar, and he threw in South Africa, seeing that news of De Wet's rebellion had been received. But most of the available cash on the ship was now in the canteen, and no business was done by the sporting individual.

Aided by fine weather, the horses were standing up to their great test of endurance in a remarkable manner. By this time they had learned to recognise the bugle which announced their feeds, and the chorus of glad neighs which greeted this bugle was one of the happiest sounds of the ship.

On November 9, occurred the one sensational incident of the voyage — the destruction of the German cruiser Emden by the Sydney at the Cocos Islands when the convoy was only 60 miles distant. Briefly, the facts of this notable incident are these:

About 6.30 a.m. a wireless S.O.S. message, more or less mutilated by a hostile instrument, was picked up from the station on the Cocos Islands advising that a strange warship was at the entrance, and was ignoring the station's mes-

sages. The Sydney was immediately despatched to the Cocos Islands by the captain of the Melbourne, who had assumed command of the convoy after the departure the previous day of the Minotaur, which followed the receipt of news of the naval disaster off Valparaiso. The Sydney engaged the Emden by 9.30 a.m., and at 11.20 a.m. she advised that the Emden was beaching herself in a sinking condition. It was afterwards learned that the Emden had crossed the track of the convoy some little distance ahead the previous night, but had seen no sign of it. This may have been due to the great care taken to mask all lights at night. The precautions against detection by the Emden, whose presence in these waters was, of course, known, had been thorough, and it had even been ordered that no empty cases should be thrown overboard lest the hostile warship should be provided with a clue. The excitement, on board the transports when the great news was announced was similar to that of Armistice Day.

Veterans of the A.M.R. have vivid memories of many stirring incidents they have witnessed, but one of the great pictures in the gallery of their minds will always be that of the Sydney dashing away to the horizon that morning in November to fight her first fight, and the first fight of the Australian Navy, against the one hostile ship which could have wrought harm to that vast convoy.

On November 13, the New Zealand transports, under the care of H.M.S. Hampshire, pushed ahead of the Australian boats on account of coal and water needs, and reached Colombo two days later. The shore leave granted was greatly enjoyed after the trying days in crowded comfortless ships which did not possess the first essentials of passenger boats in the tropics. The convoy, with the exception of 10 transports which still required coal, sailed on November 17, and reached Aden eight days later. During the run to Aden an A.M.R. mare on the Star of India, in defiance of army regulations, gave birth to a foal, and surviving the ordeal, she was regarded by the experts as something of a miracle. The foal was a fine specimen, but a foal cannot be kept by a mounted rifles regiment even as a mascot, and it had to be destroyed.

The chief memories of that run to Aden are those of a sunrise on a perfectly glassy sea, of the fins of flying fish flashing in the sun, and of hundreds and thousands of porpoises, affected by the martial spirit of the world apparently, manoeuvring in troops, squadrons, regiments, and brigades. They moved in troop column, in squadron line, and line of squadrons, the most mobile force that ever assembled.

At Aden the convoy met eight transports on their way to India with British territorial battalions, a cheery crew who insisted upon bestowing large quantities of cigarettes upon the crews of whale boats from New Zealand transports when they learned that cigarettes had been banished from the New Zealand vessels. They also rejoiced in wet canteens, which were painfully absent from the New Zealand troopships.

The colonial convoy, now united again, sailed for Suez on November 26. The days spent in the Red Sea were intensely hot and extremely trying for man and beast. The veterinary officer of the A.M.R., who had lost a remarkably small percentage of horses, and was most anxious to keep up the reputation of his horses, gained a name for professional zeal by commandeering some of the windsails which were supplying a little ventilation to the suffocating quarters of the men in the cavernous place that had once been a hold, and leading them to the horse stalls on the deck above.

The troopers, or most of them, were spending the nights on the deck, however, so no one died of suffocation in the dormitories before Suez was reached, instructions were received that the Force had to prepare to disembark in Egypt. Seeing that Turkey was now at war against the Allies, the men of the Regiment were not disheartened at hearing the destination. Those who were still pessimistic over the fear of garrison duty, cheered up visibly when the order came for the sharpening of bayonets and the over-hauling of saddlery, and they became quite optimistic when, during the passage of the Suez Canal on the night of December 1, they beheld the very considerable preparations being made for the defence of that vital line of communication. They saw real trenches for the first time, and they exchanged greetings with sentries of many different Indian regiments, who kept watch on the canal banks. This night was the first occasion that guards of the N.Z.E.F. were posted with magazines charged. A previous ship, it was said, had been fired at by scouting Turks or their Bedouin friends, so on each ship a guard was posted to return any compliments of this nature that were offered. No hostile hand disturbed the peace of that extremely peaceful night, however, and the voyagers were able to drink in the wonder of the scene.

The ships, with searchlights at their bows, sending a path of blazing light down the narrow strip of water which is the gateway to half the world, steamed slowly through. The constellations, then strange but to become so familiar to these men from Britain's farthest outpost, blazed with a splendour that intoxicated the senses—the splendour of the orient sky; the eternal desert, so quiet and still and mysterious, so alluring in that strange grey light which hides more than it reveals, whispered its seductive enchantments to these men from the distant green southern islands, and filled their hearts with a strange yearning, and longing to go out into that sandy waste and seek the Thing that called. They were afterwards to know that the soft voice of the moonlit desert was as false and cruel as the mocking mirage when it woos and beckons the thirst-tormented wanderer.

Perhaps the brooding spirit of the old, old land had wakened again at the sound of the gathering armies, and was pondering the stirring days of yore. Maybe it numbered again the legions of its dead, and there was a stirring of the countless bones which lay beneath the all-effacing sand. Perhaps it was the voice of the past telling the tale of history—how the Persian and the Roman had passed that way, how the Crusader in his mail had clanged onward to the battle of the Cross. It may have been that the spirit of the desert whispered of the flight to Egypt of a father and a mother and a

Babe. These soldiers, so unlike the warriors who once went that way, gazed in thrilled silence at the scene, but felt more than they saw. It was a wondrous night. Since then they have learned the moods of the mocking pitiless desert; they have suffered its thirst, endured its angry heat, and choked in its storm-lifted dust and sand. They sometimes curse the desert, but the beauty, the charm, the lure, the haunting whispered appeal of that night will always remain with them, for that night they stepped on to the famous stage whereon the greatest drama of all was to be enacted.

CHAPTER III.

Arrival in Egypt.

It was in high spirits that the Regiment landed at Alexandria on December 5, the freedom of movement after being "cribbed, cabined, and confined" for seven weeks, proving the most exhilarating joy. The horses, particularly those of the Star of India which had had more airy quarters than those on the Waimana, came ashore in remarkable condition. They were well conditioned and glossy coated, and were quite ready to display their colonial conceits to the smaller-framed Arab horses about the wharves. The Waimana contingent had suffered more from the heat, and some of the animals had lost their hair in patches through constant sweating, and the owners, who had travelled on the other ship, had difficulty in recognising their steeds. A few week's care ashore, however, restored them.

At least one official of Egypt had no doubt about the obedience of the New Zealand troops the day of disembarkation. He was a pilot, and he came up the gangway of the Star of India when that vessel was lying hove-to outside the harbour. An A.M.R. trooper had been posted at the top of the gangway with instructions that no one had to be allowed to come aboard. Accordingly the pilot was firmly refused admittance to the ship.

But I'm the pilot," exclaimed that official, as he attempted to push by. "I don't care a dam if you are Pontius Pilate," calmly returned the trooper, as he held his rifle horizontally across the gangway. "My orders are to let no one aboard." The incident was not noticed from the bridge, and the indignant pilot had to descend to his launch and draw out a little so that he could hail the officer on duty. The trooper in question was not a member of the guard at the Otahuhu camp which "arrested" the hot pie on its way to the officers' mess, and therefore he was not suspected of having been indulging a taste for humour.

The whole Force was transported by train to Zeitoun, an eastern suburb of Cairo, where a camp was speedily established on the very edge of the desert, and it was here that the New Zealanders lived and worked until they were called to participate in the glorious failure on the Gallipoli Peninsula. For the first week or two the A.M.R. concentrated its attention on getting the horses fit for the training ahead. When this was accomplished, the men themselves were ready for the ordeal, the getting of the horses into shape having entailed the tramping of many miles over the desert. It was then that the men began to know the desert as it is—the flats, the high soft sand hills cast up and fantastically moulded by the wind, the rocky slopes, and the flint like crests—and it was inevitably the crests whereon the troopers were trained in the art of digging trenches. The bulk of the training, however, was in the work mounted rifles are expected to perform in war, with some musketry and bayonet-fighting thrown in. Picture the Regiment in from the desert after a day's training. A dense cloud of dust, rising higher than the cloud that hangs over a column of infantry, is the first sign of the advancing horsemen. The practised eye can readily observe whether the column be mounted or afoot. The dust cloud, hanging thick for half-a-mile behind the tail of the column, comes nearer and nearer, but not at a galloping speed, because the commander does not break from the regulation trot.

Finally, the first line of horsemen looms up, but no figure is distinct, and no one identifiable until the line halts. The horses; are then led towards the water troughs, but there is not room for all to drink at once. This is not understood by the horses, and those that have to wait, pull and shove and burrow their heads against their masters to reach the water for which their dust lined throats are aching. While the watering is in progress, one may study the scene. The one colour of both man and beast is a light grey, except where perspiration makes it black. The one colour envelopes the riders' uniforms, the saddlery, and the hair and faces of the men. Looking closer it will be seen that a little ridge of clay encircles the horses' eyes, this being caused by the dust falling on the damp edge. After the horses have been thoroughly groomed, the nose bags with their strict allowance of tibbin and barley, a mixture of the country which the Colonial horses do not yet appreciate, are put on, and then, but not till then, do the troopers get a chance of cleansing their bodies of the coating of grime and grit they gathered on the desert. This was the usual routine during the training days.

Occasionally treks of two or three days' duration were made through the pleasant areas made prolific by irrigation, and these long rides along the paths between the plots of luscious beersim, and through the groves of date palms, were times of placid content, and of rare value in giving the men a chance to study the Fellaheen as he is. One or two trips were made to the Delta barrage, where the horses were swum in the Nile.

In times of freedom, most of the men became tourists, and all the wonders were thoroughly explored, even if time was found to taste the entertainments that Cairo offered. Despite the fixed convictions of many folk who were not there, the nights in Cairo were not wild orgies of dissipation in the realms of vice. Most of the gaiety was of a perfectly innocent character, the soldiers behaving just as well, if not a good deal better than the generality of tourists who go to Cairo.

On December 23, three days after His Highness Prince Hussein Kamel Pasha was proclaimed Sultan in the stead of Abbas Hilma Pasha, the late Khedive, who had shown his colours by going to Turkey after that country had joined our enemies, the Regiment, heading the column, took part in a march of all the colonial troops through Cairo, this; demonstration of strength being considered necessary in view of the seething discontent of the Nationalists over the ending of Turkish suzerainty and the establishment of British protection over Egypt. The route led from the main thoroughfares through the narrow bazaars, where the curious eyes of harem women peered through the lattice window screens of the overhanging upper storeys, and sometimes sent eloquent glances when they caught the gaze of the troopers below. A

man, whose name shall be Smith, raved about the ravishing eyes of one face at the window, and vowed he would call," but later altered his mind when he passed an establishment, the entrance of which was guarded by a spectacular gentleman of ferocious aspect — maybe a Montenegrin — who wore in the sash which encircled the top of a pair of very red and very baggy trousers, a couple of revolvers of ancient make and a brace of knives which, Smith observed, were evidences of "a hideously suspicious nature."

The mosque area, known to be the centre of seditious sentiment, was embraced in the march. The display of force may have had good results, for when the Turks made their forlorn attack on the Suez Canal, on the night of February 2— an action in which, to the great disgust of the mounted rifles, New Zealand was represented by the infantry only—Cairo remained placid; the clamour of street hawkers filled the air as it would fill the air if the trump of doom sounded; the gentlemen of importance drank their coffee in the open cafes in all serenity, and smoked the bubbling narghileh; the weird, tuneless music of the kernengeh, the arghool, and the ood, punctuated by the resounding darabukkeh, arose from the malodorous bazaars where the Ghawazee girls danced for the plaudits and piastres of the crowd; and if the students of El Azhar whispered in secret conclave and planned a jihad for the glory of Islam and the crescent, their fantastical hopes faded when the dawn broke on a calmly indifferent city.

In the one riotous incident the Colonial troops were responsible for the "battle of the Wazza" on Good Friday, which may or may not have had a real cause — A.M.R. men doubtless participated, but the Regiment was able to assume a very virtuous pose, seeing that it was called on to gallop a squadron or two, comprising all the men in camp, into Cairo to line the streets at strategic points. Any other regiment might have been detailed for this duty, but seeing that it was the A.M.R. that the order fell on, the men are still persuading themselves that they must have been the only reliable men of the hour, despite their own doubts on the question. What they would have done had the riot continued, and they had been required to quell it, no one knows, but there is a legend that "Hassan" Hammond, of the 3rd Squadron, was to be asked to address the rioters after the manner he used to address a team of bullocks which once had the misfortune to labour with him along the bush roads of Te Matakauri. It was considered that no riot could continue in the face of "Hassan's" reasoning.

An important milestone in the history of the Regiment and of the Force, was the day on which General Sir Ian Hamilton, who had come to the East on an important mission, not then divulged, reviewed the whole Colonial Corps, which comprised the 1st Australian Division and the Australian and New Zealand Division. He alone knew what would be required of these troops, practically untried and without regimental tradition behind them, but he has since recorded the high estimate he then placed upon their fighting qualities.

That dusty review will ever remain a bright memory in the minds of the men, for there the Force assembled in full strength on one parade ground for the first and last time. It was a thrilling and inspiring sight, even to those who participated, and it was not surprising to hear that the general described these young regiments as "spoiling for a fight." Whatever warring strategists may say or not say about the Gallipoli Campaign, there is no doubt about the fact that Sir Ian Hamilton has a vigour and personality that appeals to the colonials, and it is certainly a fact that at this review the general rode straight into their hearts. He was as much under inspection by the colonials as they were under inspection by him, and if he were pleased, so were the troops; and whatever happened or did not happen subsequently, the men retain feelings of warm regard towards the Commander-in-Chief. If it was he who was responsible for the failure, the men of the Dominion will be the first to offer excuse. As he rode down the long glistening line of suntanned virile manhood, he called cheery welcomes to the officers he remembered meeting when he reviewed the Territorials in New Zealand the previous year, and his smiling but keen eyes seemed to include every man in their searching gaze. After he had gone from one end to the other, the march past took place, the mounted rifles, in squadron column, first going by at the walk and afterwards at a hand gallop, which shrouded a square mile in dust.

CHAPTER IV.

“An Unknown Destination.”

A few weeks later an electric current went through the camp when the infantry received orders to prepare for embarkation at Alexandria for a secret destination. It was a sad blow to the mounted rifles again to stay behind while the infantry were sent to war. No one knew what the objective of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force was to be, but there was not a soul in camp who did not sense the coming of stirring days. In the thrill which the departure of the infantry occasioned, there was an undercurrent of excitement as if the “whispering galleries” of the East had been awakened by prescient voices that spoke of romantic deeds of arms.

On the night of the departure, troopers searched for friends along the ranks that loomed through the darkness, grasped hands they never were to touch again, and went back to the tame tiresome tasks of the horse lines. Junior officers of the mounted rifles cursed their luck, and having sat in dismal groups in the mess tent consuming strong waters, they went to bed to dream of anything but the route march ordered for the morrow. But their days went on in the same old way. It has been recorded by a painstaking adjutant that the A.M.R. moved in the direction of El Marg and carried out reconnaissance work, that it took part in operations against the A.L.H. Brigade in the vicinity of Ishkandar Shakir, and that on one sad morning when reveille sounded at 3.30 a.m. it marched against the enemy in the direction of Virgin's Breast.

And while this mimic war went on the infantry were preparing for that audacious landing on Gallipoli. When, on April 30, the news of the Landing came, the mounted rifles resembled dogs in leash in their anxiety to get away to the aid of the Force which had suffered so severely. A long, restless week went by, and then came the order for the mounted rifles to prepare to go to the front without their horses. The effect of this order on the spirits of the men was instantaneous. The “grousing” discontent that had developed gave place to the wildest exhilaration, which expressed itself in more or less tuneful song. The wave of minstrelsy that swept over the Regiment may not have added much to the art of singing, but it had a meaning which would have given pride to New Zealand, and on that account the fact is recorded. The only regret was that the horses, now trained to a very fine point, were not to share the honours of battle. But while the Regiment would have liked to be used for the purpose it had been trained, there was not a man who would have missed this chance of fighting as a foot slogger.

Unfortunately, no webb equipment was available for the troopers, but from somewhere were produced brown canvas packs which had two arm slings. These crude packs were probably the most “awkward” knapsack equipment ever issued to soldiers, and it was fortunate that they could be dispensed with as soon as the Gallipoli beach was reached. They had to be worn on top of the leather bandolier of the trooper, and they had neither fit, form, nor comeliness. There is some coordination and singleness of purpose about the webb equipment of an infantryman, but the disconnected assortment of gear of these troopers—haversack, water bottle, bandolier, overcoat—were all at war with one another, and the result was sad. When ready for the train the men felt like badly laden camels, and two of them were in such dire straits that they slipped away to the station in a “garry,” to the indignation of a sergeant-major of the old school, who demanded to be informed if the men in the cab thought they were “spare colonels or generals or somethin’” and if they intended to drive right into the trenches in their “blasted go-cart.” He also wished to be informed if the “spare generals” desired him to send a fatigue party to carry their “luggage” to the train, and get them some wine and a roll and the bosom of a duck to sustain them until their cook got sober. The culprits were glad to escape to the obscurity of an unpleasant fatigue duty.

The strength of the Regiment for embarkation was: 26 officers, 482 other ranks, and 71 horses, the horses being included in the hope that wheeled transport might soon be possible, but they were never landed. The Regiment, with the exception of a small party travelling on the Kingstonian with the horses, embarked on the Grantully Castle, on which was also the 3rd Australian Light Horse, who, like the New Zealand Mounted Rifles, were to fight dismounted. Before the ship sailed, four stowaways were found and sent back to Zeitoun. These four, not quite so fortunate as some others who got to Anzac by stealth, and there were welcomed with joy to the strength of their units, reflected the general feelings of the farriers and reinforcement details left behind, although they had a more irresponsible way of expressing their disappointment. As a matter of fact the farriers of the Regiment had contributed no small amount of gaiety to the camp on the day of departure by their competition for the two vacancies on the war establishment. Someone said that the manner in which the farriers “canvassed” every officer who might be able to support their claim for selection, reminded him of politics in the good old days of patronage.

The transports sailed on the evening of May 9, and after what seemed an endless passage of three days, arrived off Cape Helles, where lay a countless fleet of battleships, cruisers, destroyers, transports, colliers, and small craft of all descriptions. The sight of a “dummy” warship was a rare chance for a humourist, who called on heaven to witness the vanished might of the British Navy, declared his certain conviction that someone was certainly going to be hurt after all, and voiced his intention of going to no more wars until it was agreed that both sides were to fight with bladders on sticks. While the transports lay off Helles (the humourist called it “hell's point,” and said he could quite understand why the “old dago” swam it), the men witnessed the Queen Elizabeth shelling, with her 15-inch guns, the Turkish defences on the southern slopes of Achi Baba, the eminence which dominates the southern end of the Peninsula, and they also saw the distant flashes of the field artillery ashore. In the afternoon the transports weighed anchor and sailed north to Fisherman's

Hut, which seemed to be the general designation of the colonial position at that time.

While the ships were passing up the coast, those on board were able to study the general outlines of the country. To the north of Achi Baba lay the Khilid Bahr Plateau, but this feature was more distant, some flat agricultural land extending from its base to the sea. North again of this plateau rose the forbidding tangle of ridges, gullies, and crags of Sari Bair, rising by stages to the height of 971 feet at the north end of the range. When the ships hove to off the Fisher-man's Hut area, the men saw a sheer clay face rising almost from the beach, and into this ran gorges. In the distance beyond loomed the eminence of what was called Baby 700 and Chunuk Bair, the ground from which the Turk was to dominate the Anzac position — the ground which was to see the troops rise to undreamed of deeds of gallantry and heroism, but which in the end was to put the seal of failure upon an enterprise, which will be the nation's pride for aye. At the distance the position seemed so peaceful and still that the mounted riflemen were inclined to believe the rumour that they would have to march some miles before they could smell powder. But they did not then know that birds could whistle in the still of No Man's Land while the trenches on either side bristled with bayonets, and countless eyes kept ceaseless watch, and snipers with fingers on their triggers waited without a movement in their lairs for the reckless or unwary head to show.

CHAPTER V.

Gallipoli.

Soon the destroyer Colne came alongside, and the Regiment, with those ridiculous brown packs up, and all manner of things from shovels to pannikins appended, tumbled down the gangway on to her deck. Most of the men had acquired small bundles of firewood. These had been prepared by some details of the Royal Marine Light Infantry for their comrades ashore, who had taken the place of the New Zealand Infantry, now at Helles, for the Daisy Patch attack. It was a veteran who suggested that the wood ought to be taken, and it was taken, and no one was much disturbed by the wrath of a R.M.L.I. Petty officer who had something to say about colonial thieves who would steal the gold out of a tooth. As the destroyer drew shoreward the real nature of the torn, tumbled country became evident, and everyone was prepared to echo the verdict of a tired sailor who said the men who stormed those heights had "done a miracle." Suddenly a few shells burst on the beach, the first evidence of war so far. The next minute Trooper Taylor gained the distinction of being the first man in the Regiment to be wounded. When he was struck no one was aware that spent Turkish bullets, which had missed the trenches on the crest, had been dropping into the sea in the vicinity of the destroyer. Taylor did not know himself that he had been wounded. He thought that some energetic person had brought his rifle barrel into violent contact with his arm, and he turned round smartly to deal with the offender. His surprise at finding that a bullet had penetrated his arm was great.

From the destroyer the men transferred a barge, which was towed to the beach by a man-o'-war pinnace, commanded by a midshipman who looked as if he should not yet be out of the nursery, but he was a very confident young gentleman. The A.M.R. poured ashore in high spirits. A few worn, bearded men, whose sunken eyes and deeply-lined faces told of the ordeal they had been through, drifted down to the beach, where the troopers were rejoicing as fresh troops usually do. Their cheerful greetings to the men with the sunken eyes brought forth only mono-syllabic responses, and one of the weary men was heard to remark to a mate, "You'd think it was our birthday." Afterwards the troopers were to know how offensive the bounding, super abundant animal spirits of fresh troops can be to men who are tired beyond all telling.

That night the Regiment bivouacked in the scrub on the steep face of one of the gullies that made a dead end in the cliff face, and all night long the rifle fire on the crest overhead rose and swelled and died away, only to break out afresh more vicious still. At last the Regiment was at war. The brink of the great adventure had been reached, and the peace of mind that comes of sacrifice and of striving in a great cause, the calm that comes in strife to all good soldiers and gives them the power to die cheerfully, began to steal upon them. Next day the Regiment left the gully just before the Turks by means of shrapnel informed them that they had chosen the wrong side if they wanted to bivouac in safety, and relieved the Nelson and Deal Battalions of the Royal Marine Light Infantry in the trenches on Walker's

Ridge, the left section of the first crest, the R.M.L.I. leaving Anzac immediately to rejoin the Royal Naval Division at Cape Helles. The Regiment wound up the steep track leading to Walker's Ridge, looking like a human baggage train.

Walker's Ridge, the right extension of which was afterwards named Russell's Top, after Brigadier-General Russell, the commander of the Mounted Rifles Brigade, was the left section of the precipitous eminence that over-looked the beach. It gained its importance from the fact that it guarded the Nek where the Turkish line came nearest to the beach. It was, moreover, the one point on the left of the whole Anzac position where the Turks had only one line of trenches between them and the sea. Here the enemy, with one successful assault, could immediately breach the Anzac defensive system without being first or afterwards hampered by ravines. To the right of Russell's Top lay Plugge's Plateau, but this was no longer a front line position, the infantry having carried and held Pope's Ridge and Quinn's Post on the opposite side of Monash Gully, which was the extension of Shrapnel Gully, a ravine that ran in a northeast direction from Hell Spit, the southern end of the Landing Beach. The Nek was a narrow piece of ground, sloping slightly towards our line, which lay between the head of Monash Gully and the precipitous ravine which formed the left flank of the position, and which made it almost secure from serious attack from that direction. Beyond this ravine there was no definite trench system, but three outposts had been established on positions that commanded the deres, which ran down to the beach from the mass of tumbled, water-torn country on the north, and, hence, it was not necessary to hold the line running from the left of Walker's Ridge to the sea.

The Nek was a natural bridge between the two lines in this section. While the right section of the position taken over by the A.M.R., in conjunction with the W.M.R., looked across Monash Gully to the "back yards" of Pope's and Quinn's held by the infantry, the centre and left confronted, at a distance that varied from 50 to 100 yards, one of the strongest points of the Turkish line. It was what might be termed a self-contained position, because there was no definite line of communication across Monash Gully to Pope's and Quinn's. Incidentally, Pope's was similarly situated in respect to Quinn's, Dead Man's Gully, which neither side could hold, intervening. These gaps in our line added to our difficulties, but they were not so dangerous as they would appear, seeing that they could easily become death traps for an advancing enemy. The great difficulty of Walker's Ridge was that the area of ground held by us was so small that a second offensive position could not be established. One point on the right of our line was not more than 30 yards from the cliff face, and the left was not much better for rear defences. The only means of reinforcing the Ridge from the beach was via the one steep track that led up the one possible spur. At this time part of our line had "dead ground" in front, which necessitated the driving of saps to give better observation and field of fire. Towering behind the Nek on the Turkish side

was the Chessboard and Baby 700. Summed up it was far from being a comfort-able position. Its insecurity was typical of the general insecurity of the whole Anzac position.

It was on this eyrie that the A.M.R. learned to war, and a hard school it was. They could have no support from the navy because the trenches were too close, and because it was impossible to get sufficient elevation on the guns. The only artillery available was one Indian Mountain Battery, the guns of which were hidden in pits almost adjoining the trenches. These guns could not be used with any degree of freedom, however, owing to the shortage of ammunition and the superior observation of the Turks. But the mere presence of the guns and the splendid Sikh gunners was a source of strength. No soldiers had better comrades than were these Sikhs, who worshipped their little guns, and lay round them at night with their long curved swords at their hips. How generous they were! How they loved a fight! And how approvingly they smiled at a man who wore a bandage!

When the mounted rifles took over this position, the trench system had not progressed very far, but the men were amazed at what had been accomplished in so short a time by the infantry. Much more had to be done, however, and it was rather fortunate that the Turks were equally engrossed with the development of their defences, "across the way." Within a few days the troopers realised that to be able to dig is one of the first qualifications of a soldier. The first job was to "bring in" the dead ground, and the next was to develop and deepen the maze of communication trenches between the front line and the face. The track leading to the ridge had to be reduced at the steepest points, and it had to be widened at the top to allow for the passage of guns which never came. The task of the ridge was over-whelming, and it became more and more so as death, wounds, and sickness claimed their daily toll.

When the Regiment first came up, the No Man's Land in front presented a ghastly sight.

Lying among the bullet-cut scrub were the bodies of friends and foes. One sap passed by two shallow graves where Turks had been buried, and when the trench passed on two pairs of booted feet stuck out through the wall. The weather was intensely hot by day, and the stench of the whole area was frightful. There was no escape from the smell of death, which clung to the men's clothing, and even seemed to permeate the biscuits which, with bully beef and jam, formed the staple ration. Another horror was the flies, which swarmed in myriads in the trenches, preventing men from snatching a little much needed sleep when the opportunity offered in the daytime, and making eating a misery. It was impossible to leave food exposed, and the only time that the "billies" of bully and biscuit stew were free from flies was when they were on the little smoky fireplaces in recesses of the communication trenches. There was no regimental cooking, of course, rations being issued to sections (four men), who could eat them when and how they liked. Owing to the annoyance of the flies some sections did not eat anything but a dry biscuit during the daytime. To eat biscuit and jam in the daytime a man had to keep moving the hand that held the food. Shrapnel and sniping were often severe, but they did not drive men to distraction as did the flies.

The Regiment remained wonderfully cheerful, however, and even the flies were made the subject of humour. For instance, one man composed the following "verse," which was sung with great gusto to the hymn tune "There is a Happy Land"

This is our hymn of hate, "Gott strafe the flies,"
Sing it early, sing it late, "Gott strafe the flies."
Where they come from we can't tell,
But they surely give us hell.
We can only sit and yell, "Gott strafe the flies."

Besides flies there were lice, and although most men had the chance of a swim in the sea every few days, no one was quite free of this affliction. But again the humourist found relief in verse, and composed the following to the tune of The Little Grey Home in the West "— There's a trench on the slope of the hill, called by the Turk, Chunuk Bair
That's where we reside in the warm summertime in a hole that resembles a lair.
And there's plenty of company, too; how they itch, how they tickle and bite!
We would happier be with Turk shrapnel for tea than the little grey boys of the night.

With all these discomforts, the exhaustion of labour, the strain of unceasing vigil and shell fire, the lack of nourishing food, and little sleep, there was always a shortage of water and the possibility of no water at all. One pint of water a day was the usual issue. When the Turkish artillery fire from Anafarta, to the north, or from the Olive Grove to the south, sunk a water barge as it approached the beach, there was likely to be no water issue. There on Walker's Ridge the men learned the art of washing and shaving with about three spoonfuls of water, which was all that could ever be spared out of the pint. Later, a well was sunk beneath the ridge, about 30 yards from the sea, but the water was very brackish. Another well was sunk in Sphinx Gully, where the Regiment went to "rest"—the "rest" consisting of sapping in the front positions above instead of watching for the Turk — but the small flow that was obtained was condemned by the medical officer. For men who had to toil so strenuously with pick and shovel in that summer heat of the Aegean, water was the first need, but they had to survive without it.

These were the conditions of life under which the Regiment settled down to the stationary struggle on the ridge, a regiment still untested.

Walker's Ridge was a post of honour, and it stands to the credit of the A.M.R. that they were entrusted with it. But the higher command did not appear to have any doubts about any of the mounted rifles units. It is recalled that when General Birdwood met the colonel, shortly after the arrival of the mounted brigade, he fervently exclaimed, "Thank God you have come, Mackesy," referring, of course, to the whole brigade. Posts of honour, however, are posts of danger and difficulty, and Walker's Ridge was no exception. Apart from the general difficulties common to the whole of Anzac, Walker's Ridge possessed some peculiar to itself a statement, by the way, that does not mean that other positions of the line did not possess their own particular troubles.

One of the difficulties that beset Walker's when the mounted rifles arrived there was the fire superiority of the Turks.

Their wild fusillades during the night were of little consequence. They did not succeed even in drawing a return fire, and thereby cause a waste of ammunition. But during the long hours of daylight the Turks had us almost blinded. One reason was that they held higher ground, which not only gave them superior observation, but also made it possible for them to have sniping holes beneath their own parapet, often less than 50 yards away. This was an impossibility on our side. Another reason was that the Turks, who, be it remembered, were filled with the confidence of expert marksmen not yet challenged, had prepared sniping "possies" in unexpected places among the scrub outside their line, and on the higher ground behind. The R. M. L. 1. had not been able to remove this dangerous sniping menace. Composed mainly of men who had used firearms from boyhood, the Regiment speedily set about killing the sniping.

The supply of a number of periscopes, manufactured by handy men on the beach, partly over came the disadvantage of holding the low ground, but even then good counter-sniping was difficult, seeing that a man, after spotting a mark through a periscope, had to drop it, pick up his rifle, and expose himself, while he again found the mark, sighted, and fired. Then came another "home-made" invention, in the shape of a periscopic attachment for rifles, which put our men almost on an equal footing with the Turk. It was a slow business to align the sights on a mark when the sighting was done through the reflecting glasses, but it could be done, and it was possible to wait for a movement at a suspected place with the same deadly patience of the enemy snipers in their hidden "possies." The Turks made great rifle practice in shattering the top glass of the periscopes, but they rapidly lost their confidence. Within a week the men of the A.M.R. had killed a number of Turkish snipers, and had very definitely cooled the ardour of the enemy generally for this form of war. Many of the "cubby holes" beneath the Turk parapet became untenable through the deadly vigilance of our men. One of these holes, a mere stone's throw from our trench, was "spotted" in a somewhat strange way. The back of this hole was usually covered by a piece of sacking when it was not filled by the head and shoulders of a sniper, to prevent the sunlight shining behind it, and so revealing its position. One bright morning the sniper, after withdrawing, neglecting to "drop his curtain," as one cheerful soul described it, and the watchers of the A.M.R. were astonished to see pairs of legs passing at the end of the little tunnel. One man sighted a periscopic rifle on to the hole, and, refraining from firing at the passing legs, settled down to wait for the sniper to "come home." After two hours of waiting a man's head and shoulders shut out the light in the hole. The breathless trooper carefully fired, and he was able to see a body slowly drop downward.

It was evident the Turks were doing a lot of work in front of the A.M.R., and a patrol, under Corporal McDonald, was sent out on May 15th, and returned with valuable information that the enemy were making trenches, etc. On May 16th, a large concentration of the enemy was evident on this front. Lieutenant P. Logan volunteered to reconnoitre the position. Taking Trooper Heays with him, he went out about an hour before dark, and got quite close to the enemy trenches. He came back with the exact positions of the works the enemy were building on the "Nek," information that was very valuable when the attack came.

CHAPTER VI.

Defence of Walker's Ridge.

It was in the early hours of May 19 that the Regiment fought its first fight, and was able to justify the confidence that had been placed in it. It had been known that the Turks had been heavily reinforced at Anzac, and that an attempt was to be made to "push the British into the sea." Accordingly every precaution was taken by the mounted rifles, but it was a most inopportune time to meet an attack owing to the fact that the "dead ground" in the centre of the line was in the process of being "brought in." A sap, about two chains long, had been driven out from the left of the centre at right angles to the fire trench, and another had been started at the right of the centre to junction with the other and form a new line. Between the heads of these two works there was a gap through which the enemy might pour down on the original front line.

On the night of May 18, the 3rd squadron occupied the left, including the new sap which ran out inconclusively at right angles into No Man's Land. Major Schofield was in command of this section. On their right and in the other new sap was the 4th squadron, the 11th squadron being in support behind the two squadrons in the maze of communication trenches that gave no observation and no field of fire. Further to the right was the W.M.R. About midnight a tremendous fusillade broke out from the Turkish line opposite. It was mainly machine-gun and rifle fire, but it was so intense that it killed any observation that might have been made. The night was pitch black, however, and in any case little could have been seen. Everyone was called to arms when the enemy tuned up, and the troops which had been lying in immediate support, filed into the front saps, filling them to their fullest capacity. There was probably a bayonet to every yard. For three long hours they crouched in the narrow saps, which were still without fire steps in many places. The strain of waiting for action is always trying, even to seasoned troops, and it was something of an ordeal for men who were about to fight their first action. But confidence and good humour saw them through.

Finally, at 3.30 a.m., the Turkish fire slackened, and then, after an ominous silence, the enemy sprang to the attack. Cries of "Allah, Allah, Allah," from thousands of throats rent the air—a really fearsome battle-cry, until one gets used to it. Closer and closer came the charge, but still fire was withheld. The squadron officers being scattered among the men made this possible. It was a supreme test of discipline. Not until the first line of Turks was 20 yards away was the order for rapid fire given. The troopers sprang to the parapet like greyhounds, and in a second they were pouring a devastating fire into the approaching ranks. In many cases men were able to remain in position only by bracing one foot against the back wall of the trench. It was not a modern fight. There were no flares to throw out in front and not even any jam tin bombs. It was a battle of bullet and steel.

With the first blaze of fire that pierced the darkness of the mounted rifles line, the first line of Turks seemed to disappear, but other lines came on to meet the same fate. Before long numbers of the enemy were throwing themselves flat to escape from the flying sheet of metal, hut at the very place where they should have made the last rush.

Our men began to drop, but even their immediate neighbours were hardly conscious of the fact. The thrill of battle possessed them. Rifle barrels grew too hot to touch and bolts began to get stiff. The imprecations that penetrated the din when bolts jammed, through the heat and grit, were ferocious. The men in trouble were possessed of the healthy belief that if their particular rifles were out of action everything was lost. The end of the left sap became a very warm corner. Here Lieutenant Weir and some of his troop put up a desperate struggle, in which bayonets were used, and drove off three rushes.

On the left, where the old line ran to within a few yards of the gully, matters were in doubt for a time, but Sergeant Thompson, who was killed in August, displayed fine leadership, and the Turks were driven off. It was a small section of the fight, but had it not been for this small body of the 3rd squadron the Turks might have been able to work round the end of the line and penetrate the rear.

The Turks did not appear to have a knowledge of our position and its weaknesses. This became palpably apparent when they failed to concentrate upon the gap between the head of the left sap and the position held by the 4th squadron, to the right. They seemed to lose direction, con-fused, perhaps, by the angles of the line. The greatest stand of the night was made by a part of the 4th squadron, and it should be described in detail.

Lieutenant J. M. Roberts was in command of the squadron. Captain Bluck, who had been in command of the Waikatos after Major Tattersall had taken the place of Major Chapman as second in command of the Regiment when it left Zeitoun, had been killed by a sniper that morning. Lieu-tenant Roberts had had only two hours of daylight in which to familiarise himself with the position and make his dispositions. He decided to put Lieutenant C. James, with his troop (the Whakatane Troop), into the new front line, on the right, which, it was obvious, would have to bear the force of the attack. The rest of the 4th squadron occupied the old line, to the right, overlooking Monash Gully, with the exception of Lieutenant Milliken's troop, which was held in reserve. The Whakatane Troop was practically isolated owing to the presence of a small gap between their right and the old line, but this gap was not the menace of the gap on their left, although it made reinforcement and communication difficult. Lieutenant James' orders were to hold the little line for 20 minutes at all costs — and he and his men well knew what the cost would be. They knew that they would have to leave their sap and fight in the open, owing to the fact that in its present state it was merely a deep, narrow ditch, from which

they could not fight. It had no fire steps, and it was so narrow that two men could not pass in it. As soon as the attack was launched, Lieutenant James and his men sprang over the parapet, and, lying down in the open, poured their fire into the Turks.

Soon they were at point-blank range, and dozens of Turks were shot down at a distance of 10 feet. The miracle was how the little band of heroes was not overwhelmed. The Turks had men enough to sweep through them like a hurricane, but their fire was so well directed, and their demeanour so stubborn, that every rush was crushed, the Turks doing the fatal thing of lying down at the very time their final resolute rush should have been made. It was probably their fear of resolute steel that stopped them. Within a few minutes two-thirds of the troop had become casualties, Lieutenant James being among the killed, but the line held. Then Lieutenant Milliken was ordered to reinforce with the reserve troop, and after him were sent two troops of the 11th squadron, commanded by Lieutenant Finlayson and Lieutenant Logan, Captain Mackesy, of the 11th, accompanying them.

On the whole ridge were only two machine-guns, one of the W.M.R. being at the angle of the left sap and the old line, where it had a wide field of fire, and it did tremendous execution. The other, belonging to the Regiment, was on the right of the Waikatos, but owing to the angles of the new sap and the presence of the steep face of Monash Gully, on its right front, its field of fire was very restricted, and the support it gave was more moral than actual.

As the first streaks of dawn rose above the hills which overlook the field of Troy, the Turks retired at the run. Some, who had been feigning dead, darted hack through the scrub, amid showers of bullets. Among the snipers was the colonel, who had been watching the movement from the highest point of the parados. It was the most exposed position of the line, and why he was not shot down is a mystery.

Flushed as they were with success, the mounted rifles did not relax their vigilance. Wearing smiles, and heaven-sent cigarettes in their countenances, they waited for the next attack which was fully expected, knowing that this time the Turk would get it worse than before. But the attack never came. A C.M.R. machine-gun that had been posted on a clay peak in the gorge, on the left, was able to get on to a group of German officers who were conferring in what they had believed to be a safe hollow, and this seemed to end the hopes of the Turks for the time being.

The area of the action was on back yard scale and on our side it was manned accordingly, but the little line had to face a concentration of the enemy that might have been used over a front double the length of the ridge position. Further, the nature of the position had the effect of throwing the whole weight of the attack upon about half our front, in which there was room for less than half the number of bayonets necessary. Yet the attack was utterly crushed, and in about four acres the Turks left nearly 500 dead. The position was held against the principles of war. The whole attack did not extend beyond Quinn's Post, where a very desperate onslaught was beaten off by the 4th Australian Brigade, but nowhere did a Turk enter the colonial line and live two seconds. The total Turkish casualties for the night were estimated at 7,000. The losses of the Regiment were 23 killed, and about the same amount wounded.

A splendid example was set to the men by Colonel Mackesy during the fight. He first appeared, with rifle and bayonet, in the advanced sap on the right. After firing for a time he made his way to the left sap, and finding no room on the parapet, climbed to the parados, which was the highest and most exposed point in the vicinity, and from there emptied several magazines. When the attack was at its height, an order "—Cease fire, Australians advancing on your right" was passed down the advanced sap held by the 3rd squadrons. In Egypt the men had been thoroughly trained in the passing of orders down a line by word of mouth. On one occasion, General Godley had questioned the Regiment's ability in this direction, and he accepted the colonel's permission to test them. A galloper was started down the line as the verbal order was given to the first man, and the verbal order reached the end before the galloper. Almost automatically, therefore, the order to cease fire was shouted from man to man, and automatically some men took the pressure off their triggers, but the colonel instantly passed back, "Australians be damned! Ask where the order came from?" Back went this order, and no reply was returned.

It was probably the first time in history that a Maori war cry mingled with that of the Mohammedan. The mounted men fought in comparative silence as far as vocal sounds were concerned, but once the Maori haka, "Komate, komate," resounded down the mounted rifle line.

The following morning the regiment received a tribute which made them very proud. It was not from a general but from a squadron sergeant-major who belonged to the old school of the Imperial Cavalry. He was a perfect soldier, but all through the training days he had expressed grave doubts about a regiment that did not worry about its buttons and the brilliancy of its spurs, and which could not see the importance of saluting, and so on. Coming to a group of men with battle stains all over them, he said, "I take it all back. First time in action and steady as rocks. You'll do me." Praise from Sir Ian Hamilton himself could not have pleased the men more.

A staff officer of the brigade related how he had met a party of unofficial reinforcements coming up the track from the beach during the fight. He said he had never seen such a mixture. There were a few A.S.C. men, a couple of Indians, three or four Medical Corps men, and a doctor, all carrying rifles, a sailor, who like many others on the beach proudly sported a pair of riding pants and a wide-awake hat, and finally a midshipman carrying a rifle almost as long as himself. They all wanted to "see the fun," as the middy expressed it. Such was the spirit of Anzac.

CHAPTER VII.

The Day After.

Exhausted though the men were there was no rest for them this day. Parties were set to work to complete the gap in the centre of the line, and everyone else was engaged in making the saps into fire trenches. For a time in the afternoon, rapid fire (the only poor substitute for artillery fire) was opened on the Turkish line with a view to covering an advance by sections of regiments, ordered by the corps commander, the purpose being to destroy the enemy's machine guns. This order was countermanded, however, and fortunately so, for the Turkish line on the Nek was tremendously strong, bristling with a mass of well-concealed machine guns, and, as was afterwards proved by the disastrous attempt of the Light Horse, it was well nigh invulnerable unless battered to pieces by heavy artillery fire. But we had neither the guns nor the ammunition for such preparation, even if this part of the Turkish line had not had the security from barrage fire, which it owed to its nearness to a cliff over 200 feet high, and its proximity to our line. A surprise night attack with bombs might have succeeded, but, lackaday, we had no bombs other than a few of the home-made jam tin variety, and few there were who would not rather have trusted in their bayonets and their rifle butts.

On the 20th, the work on the defences was pushed on, many of the men having had no sleep and practically no rest for 40 hours. During the day the Turk shelled our lines more severely than usual, and among those wounded was Major J.N.McCarroll, the commander of 11th squadron. Fortunately his wounds did not incapacitate him for long. He returned in September, eventually being promoted to the command of the Regiment, and gaining the highest distinctions for his masterly leadership in the Palestine campaign.

Towards evening of this day the men had one of the surprises of their lives. Suddenly hundreds of white flags were waved along the Turkish line, and then large numbers of Turks came out of their trenches, and, still waving the flags, moved towards our lines. Colonel Mackesy immediately mounted the parapet and called on the Turks to stop and state their intentions. He called first in French, then in German, and then in English, but got no reply he could understand. He then told the regimental interpreter to call in Turkish. A Turkish officer replied that they wanted a truce so that they might bury their dead. Such a request by Turks who are notoriously indifferent to sanitary safeguards sounded suspicious. However, the Turks sent forward an officer blindfolded, and he was sent to brigade headquarters while the colonel continued the parley. It was then perceived that behind the unarmed men with flags were many with rifles and bayonets, and above the Turkish parapet immediately opposite, showed the tops of a thick line of bayonets. The enemy were immediately given two minutes to get back to their trenches. It was not promptly obeyed, however, and the whole line opened fire, one of our machine guns accounting for 30 or 40 of the treacherous enemy. Never again was a ruse of this kind attempted.

The following morning the Turks sent in from Gaba Tepe, on the extreme right, an officer to arrange for an armistice so that the dead might be buried. The colonial commander was as anxious as the Turks to have an armistice for burials, for many dead heroes of the landing still lay in the bullet-swept zone, the prone forms all lying with the head to the foe, speaking eloquently of the valour of the first fierce charge. It was most important, however, that the enemy should not be given a chance of scrutinising our trenches with all their weaknesses and imperfections, and some days were spent in drawing up the terms of the armistice. It was finally agreed that the armistice should cover the period from 7.30 a.m. to 4.80 p.m., on May 24; that the Turkish burial parties were to work on one side and our parties on the other side of a line pegged down the centre of No Man's Land; that the bodies of foes found by either side were to be carried to the dividing line and handed over; and that rifles were to be handed to whatever side had owned them. Parties from each side marked out the dividing line early in the morning, and then the burial parties commenced their gruesome task. Here and there foes fraternised, and sometimes exchanged samples of their rations.

But the majority of our men were too overcome at the sight of the dead, sometimes lying literally in heaps, to have much concern with the living. In front of the Walker's Ridge line lay an Australian bugler, a mere boy, with his bugle slung across his shoulders. Nearby lay the body of a New Zealand infantryman, his hands still grasping an outstretched rifle, the bayonet of which was in the body of a Turk. The agreement to carry the Turkish bodies to the centre line could not be carried out owing to their number, and it was mutually agreed that each side should bury all the dead on its side of the line. The work was accomplished by the time appointed and the parties returned to their trenches.

CHAPTER VIII.

Life at Anzac.

At this time the A.M.R. did not occupy the trenches on Walker's Ridge, the Regiment having been relieved by the 9th A.L.H. The A.M.R. was nominally resting in dug-outs on the beach side of Plugge's Plateau, but in actual fact there was no rest on Anzac. There was no rest from shell fire, and no rest from toil. When a regiment was sent to a beach gully for "rest" it meant that it was treated to a more liberal allowance of shrapnel, and more work than usual. When the A.M.R., in these periods of rest, was not carrying water and rations, it was reducing grades on the track to Walker's, or driving new saps or under-ground galleries in the most advanced positions on the ridge. The men became inured to the experience of digging at new saps a considerable distance from the main line, with parties of the enemy similarly engaged, a matter of 20 or 30 yards away. In the friendly daylight the work in these places was not disturbing, the chief diverting circumstance being when Turkish sentries took flying shots at the shovels when they showed over the top. This amusement became quite popular with both sides, and it was the custom to wave the shovels to signal that the marksman had missed. Those sapping on both sides seemed to think that this little acknowledgement was due to the diligent sentry. During the lonesome night, however, the forward sapping had nothing to relieve the nerves.

Frequently men had to work in narrow grave-like places from which a sentry could not be seen, and then the strain was worse than it was under any other circumstance. The Regiment was very emphatic on this point, particularly because they felt that little account was taken in certain quarters of the immense physical and nervous strain imposed by this work. "It's not so bad to go out in a scrap," exclaimed one trooper, "but I object to being speared like a flounder in this ditch. A'course I could chuck a pick, or a spade, or a lump of rock for that matter at a prowling Turk, damn him, but what's he likely to be doin' in the meantime. S'no good me tellin' him that I'm only an amateur sapper, and much too young to die. I don't hold with this dig, dig, digging, and arguin' in point. Why don't we fight the damned thing out." From which, of course, it will be seen that the trooper's nerves were not benefiting much by the "rest." A philosopher, who at the moment was wielding the pick, found some consolation in his firm belief that "the gentlemen engaged in a similar capacity opposite were probably just as funk'd as he was. He really thought they might heave them over a tin of bully as a sign of sympathy." And then the corporal suggested that if they didn't stop the debate, Abdul would achieve the same result by a sanguinary bomb. Trooper No. 1, having remarked somewhat bitterly that it wouldn't be so bad if the sentry guarding him would sometimes not go to sleep, the operations against terra firma proceeded. The relating of this midnight conversation not only shows the rest-time employments of the troopers, but also indicates the kind of humour that was the law of Anzac — the unwritten law, which ordained everything must be made the subject of mirth, even if it were bitter mirth. Who can say how much of the strength of Anzac had its being in this strange attitude of mind, this determination to jest at hunger and thirst and flies and at death itself? Was it Nature's compensation? Was it the sure and certain consequence of overtaxed bodies and nerves? Was it the outward and visible sign of that strange peace, bred of self-sacrifice, that comes to a good soldier in the struggle and shines brightest when the agony is greatest and death nearest? Was it that of which the great-hearted Grenfell sang in his poem "Into Battle."

Through joy and blindness he shall know,
Not caring much to know, that still
Nor lead nor steel shall reach him, so
That it be not the Destined Will.

The thundering line of battle stands,
And in the air Death moans and sings;
But Day shall clasp him with strong hands,
And Night shall fold him in soft wings.

The days wore on — hot days, weary days, and always the daily shelling, always the daily losses through death and wounds and disease, always the same struggle against bodily exhaustion through lack of sleep, lack of nourishing food and incessant toil. Soon most laces took on the "Anzac look," the chief characteristics being the deepening of the lines from the sides of the mouth to the nose. The second period of "rest" was spent in Mule Gully, which ran into the cliff at the point where the Sphinx Head clung to the top of the crest. Here one night the portion of the A.M.R. not on duty held a concert in the darkness, lights at night never being permitted, owing to the danger of detection by the enemy aircraft. The audience sat in groups along the sides of the ravine and had a very jolly time, notwithstanding the fact that transport mules of the Indian Mounted Battery frequently passed through the auditorium. Silent onlookers were the Sikh gunners, who thoroughly approved of such diversions, even if our tastes did not lie in the direction of drum thumping and boisterous mirth.

While in this gully the Turks were regular with their morning and evening "hate" from the guns on Anafarta, to the north, but the dug-outs were all on the "safe" side, and damage was only suffered when men were caught out of their dug-outs. To give more warning than the shriek the shells gave, it was decided to post a man on a pinnacle on the top of the cliff whence he could see the flash of the gun as it fired. His duty was then to blow a whistle. For a time the plan worked well, and it was the best possible plan, seeing that the annoying gun was in a tunnel beyond the reach of the shells of the battleships that had searched for it, only coming to the tunnel mouth to fire. By and bye, the lookout man got tired of looking for the gun to fire, and finally he started to read a newspaper. After that his whistle was rarely before the whistle of the coming shell and he had to be supplanted.

During this period of most laborious inactivity, the Royal Navy, which has been described as "the father and the mother of the Gallipoli forces," kept constant watch and ward. The whole campaign of course depended upon the Navy holding the lines of communication, which were the sea, but in connection with offensive aid, the New Zealanders hold in most affectionate regard the destroyers which night and day patrolled the coastline. What a naval pageant it would have been from the cliff tops had it not been so. Sometimes in the periods of strange stillness that came over the little span of tumbled earth that was Anzac, men would drink in the beauty of the seascape — the blue Aegean glistening in the sun, the Island peak of Samo'thrace glowing purple through the distant haze, in the middle distance the white sail of some small Greek craft, which gave men visions of the ancient days when the Greeks sailed down that same blue waterway to the classic plains of Troy; and in the foreground the black swift wonderful destroyers of the 20th century, turning in their own length like greyhounds in the chase, and suddenly sending a savage flash of flame from guns that had seen the smoke of an unwary Turkish gun on the distant frowning slopes, for possession of which men toiled and suffered and died.

On May 31, the Wellington Mounted Rifles in No. 3 Outpost, an eminence in the gorge on the left, met serious trouble. In this advanced position, which was really a triangle formed by the junction of Sazli Beit Jere and Chailak IJere, the Wellingtons were suddenly attacked by very large numbers, and although they held on in the shallow trenches against a withering fire and bomb-throwing at close range, they were almost surrounded. During the afternoon they signalled for immediate reinforcements, and the A.M.R., then in the gully below Plugge's, was ordered to prepare for the task. In the early evening the Regiment moved along the beach and got in position at the bottom end of the wide dere. Their aid was not required, however, for after dark the Wellingtons were able to retire out of the untenable position which thereafter was held by the enemy until the great advance of August.

On June 10, a party of scouts, which included a number of A.M.R. men, had an exciting brush with the Turks on the flat which stretched from behind the north outposts to Suvla Bay. This party had gone out on a reconnoitring expedition during the night, and were returning along the sand hills of the beach in the morning when they were observed by the enemy, who despatched a strong party down a water-course that ran right to the beach, with the evident object of intercepting them. From the top of Walker's Ridge the A.M.R. saw the Turkish move, but the scouts did not, and for a few moments the men on the hill felt that the party would be cut off. The scouts, however, saw their danger, and leaving the cover of the sand mounds they took to the hard wet sand at the water's edge and set off at a run. In breathless excitement the troopers on the hill watched the race. Then, just at the critical moment, one of the Indian mountain guns on Walker's Ridge opened fire on the Turks. The shooting was perfect. The shells burst right among the enemy in the narrow water-course, and stopped them just in time to allow the scouts to pass the end and into the outer end of our territory. Then a destroyer, the always faithful destroyer, swept close into the shore opposite the water-course and shelled the Turks in it while the scouts made good their retreat. It was a dramatic incident in which the wonderful luck followed our men.