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## Combat of Giants in the Zone Where the Nfld. Regiment Has Been Transferred.

### Four Days and Nights Fight in Gallipoli—Generals With Rifles—Massed Turks Wiped Out by Warships' Fire.

(By E. Ashmead-Bartlett.)

Dardanelles, Aug. 19 (via Alexandria, Sept. 1.) Since the great battle—the greatest fought on the Gallipoli Peninsula—closed on the evening of August 10 both armies have been busily engaged in consolidating their new positions, in taking stock of their gains and losses, replenishing their ammunition and munitions, and in sorting out and reorganizing the divisions, brigades, and battalions which of necessity became intermingled in this rugged, mountainous country.

Since last cabling I have had time to visit the ground over which the Anzac Corps advanced in its desperate efforts, extending over four consecutive days, to reach the crest of Sari Bair, the commanding ridge overlooking the Dardanelles, which gives access to the highest peak of all—the sinister heights of Koja Chemen—which is torn asunder by a giant ravine. The New Zealand infantry, the Gurkhas, and some other battalions almost reached their objective, but were unable to hold their ground through no fault of their own.

The Gurkhas actually reached the crest of the plateau. At the same moment the Turks, taking advantage of confusion, counter-attacks, in great force, and the gallant men from the hills were driven back off the crest to the lower slopes beneath. But the survivors obtained a view and have given a description of the promised land which lay beneath them. Below lay the waters of the Dardanelles, and they looked down on the Narrows and Kilit Bahr.

Along the roads they watched the Turkish transport steaming southwards and motor-cars dashing to and fro. It was a bitter disappointment to have to relinquish the crest when it almost seemed within their grasp after so many months, but there was no alternative.

The Anzac Corps fought like lions and accomplished a feat of arms in climbing these heights almost without a parallel, but all through, they were handicapped by the failure of a corps to make good its positions on the Anafarta hills farther north and thus check the enemy's shell fire.

#### COMBAT OF GIANTS.

When all the details of these complicated operations are collected and sifted they will form one of the most fascinating pages of the whole war. It was a combat of giants in a giant country, and it is one point stands out more than another it is the marvelous hardihood, tenacity, and reckless courage shown by the Australians and New Zealanders. Neither would it be fair to overlook the part played by a division of our new armies in this section of the field.

Although new to their work and unaccustomed to the novel conditions of mountain warfare and not acclimatized to marching, fighting, and climbing in the heat of August, often for hours without water, they nobly supported the overseas men and suffered heavy losses unflinchingly.

In order to enable the forces detailed for the main movement, which, it was hoped, would lead to the occupation of the Sari Bair position, to advance from Chunuk Bair through Q Hill to Koja Chemen Tepe, it was necessary to attract the enemy's attention towards the south and force him to keep his troops in front of our lines in position while the main force debouched from the Anzac position. Therefore at 5.30 on August 6th an Australian division made a desperate attack on the Lone Pine position, situated on a plateau 400 feet high southeast of the Anzac lines. Quite apart from acting as a diversion, this position has great strategic importance, for it opens up the main line of communication between Anzac and the Kilit Bahr plateau further south.

Therefore the Turks had fortified it with the utmost care and had turned it into a veritable fortress, for they had covered in their trenches with huge pine logs, railway sleepers, and

teak planks of immense thickness, covering the whole with earth so that their trenches were impervious to all shells except those from the heavy howitzers.

The Australians rushed forward to the assault with the fury of fanatics, taking little heed of a tremendous sharpnel fire and enflaming rifle fire. On reaching the trenches the great difficulty was to force their way in, for the head cover was so strong and heavy that it had to be torn away by main force. Groups of men effected entrances at various points and jumped in on top of the Turks, who fought furiously, caught as they were in a trap. Some surrendered, but the majority chose to die fighting.

In every trench and sap and dug-out desperate hand-to-hand fighting took place, four lines of trenches being captured in succession, fresh infantry being poured in as the advancing lines were thinned by losses. In this fighting bombs played the most important role, and it was only by keeping up an unceasing supply that the Australians were able to hold the position after it had been won.

The Turks massed their forces, and for three nights and days made desperate counter-attacks, frequently retaking sections of the line, only to be driven out again. In this extraordinary struggle, which took place almost underground, both sides fought with an utter disregard for life. The wounded and dead, choked the trenches almost to the top, but the survivors carried on the fight over heaps of corpses.

In spite of immense Turk reinforcements and their most determined courage the Australians held the ground thus won, and finally the Turks wearied of the struggle.

The bodies of 1,000 Turks and overseas Britishers were removed from the trenches, but hundreds of others lie outside. The total Turkish losses in this section alone are estimated at 5,000, chiefly incurred in their furious counter-attacks, among which each bomb burst with fearful effect. This capture of Lone Pine is the most desperate hand-to-hand fight that has taken place on the peninsula. But this was but a diversion and preliminary to the main movement northwards which began the same evening under cover of darkness.

#### SARI BAIR—GREATEST FEAT OF THE WAR.

No finer feat has been accomplished in the course of the war than the manner in which the troops destined for the main movement against the Sari Bair ridge were deployed for the attack. Without a minute examination of the map, it is difficult to make the position clear, but it must be understood that the original Anzac position consists of two semicircular ridges of hills with the north and south flanks resting on the coast and almost entirely surrounded by higher ground, on which the enemy has his trenches and thus holds the inner position in a vise.

From Anzac Cove the hills culminating in Koja Chemen Tepe take a general direction northeast, leaving an ever-widening gap of flat ground between them and the seashore, which stretches northwards to Anafarta Bay. Along this flat ground the Australians have a line of outposts, the most advanced of which when the movement began was No. 2 Post, just beyond the point known as Fishermen's Hut, all connected by a wide sap, because in daylight it is impossible to cross the flat ground in the open, as the enemy holds all the positions on the hills above.

All the troops' stores and ammunition destined for the attack on the Sari Bair position had during the days to be passed out to No. 2 Post along this sap or else along the beach under cover of darkness. Millions of rounds of ammunition and thousands of shells were successfully concentrated at the advance posts without the enemy becoming aware of the

movement; neither did he know of the strong reinforcements which had reached the Australian Corps. All this required the utmost skill and was successfully kept a profound secret.

The troops had therefore to leave the Anzac position in narrow columns pass along the sap or the beach after dark, and then, having passed the outposts, to deploy over a wide front facing the various spurs and deep ravines which give access to the Sari Bair position. But before this could be attacked a number of outlying posts held by the enemy—old No. 3 Post, Bauchop's Hill, Big Table Top, and Little Table Top—had first to be taken and held.

The Turks at old No. 3 had no suspicion of the coming attack. The Australians dashed forward and speedily captured the position. In succession throughout the night Bauchop's Hill and Big and Little Table Tops were occupied. By the morning of the 7th our whole force was holding the front Damakjelik Bair to Sazli Dere and was slowly moving towards the main Sari Bair position, in face of great difficulties, harassed by the enemy's snipers and checked by the difficulties of the ground and the scarcity of water.

At dawn on the 7th the left of our line had reached the Asma Dere position. The Indians had advanced a long way towards Chunuk Bair and had reached the farm, while the New Zealand infantry was on Rhododendron Spur and ridge.

At 4 a.m. on August 8 the advance was once more resumed. The Australian infantry on the left advanced from Asma Dere to Abdel Rahmae Bair, from which position it was hoped it could wheel to the right and attack Koja Chemen Tepe. But little or no progress could be made with this attack. The Turks were in great strength and at one time threatened to surround the force, which had to be withdrawn to its original position on Asma Dere, where it held out all day against determined attacks.

Meanwhile, the New Zealand column, advancing up Rhododendron Ridge, made a most determined assault on the crest and succeeded in gaining the south-western slopes of the main peak, Chunuk Bair, while the Indians on their left also gained ground north-east of the farm and on Hill Q. Again the exhaustion of the troops, the necessity of resorting to the units, the scarcity of water, and the collection of the great numbers of wounded made it necessary to break off the action until daylight.

Throughout the afternoon of August 8 the forces were reorganized into three columns—New Zealanders, Indians, and a brigade—for a final assault on Chunuk Bair, which was timed to begin at dawn on August 9. The advance on the morning of August 9th was preceded by a heavy bombardment of Chunuk Bair and Hill Q by naval and land guns. The advance of No. 3 column was delayed by the broken nature of the ground and the enemy's resistance. Meanwhile the Gurkhas advanced gallantly up the slopes of Sari Bair and actually succeeded in reaching the heights on the neck between Chunuk Bair and Hill Q.

#### CHARGE BY MASSED TURKS.

It was from here that they looked down on the Dardanelles, but were unfortunately unable to hold their position in the face of violent counter-attacks and heavy shell fire. Meanwhile the Turks counter-attacked the left column in great strength, and they were compelled to withdraw to the lower slopes of Sari Bair. Meanwhile, throughout the day and night, the New Zealanders succeeded in maintaining their hold on Chunuk Bair, although they were thoroughly exhausted. During the night of the 9th the exhausted New Zealanders were relieved by two other regiments.

At dawn on the 10th the Turks, who had been strongly reinforced, made a most desperate assault on our lines from Hill Q and Chunuk Bair. To the strength of a division in successive lines they hurled themselves, quite regardless of their lives, on the two regiments, who, after a desperate resistance, were driven from their position by artillery fire and sheer weight of numbers further down upon the slopes of Chunuk Bair. Following up their success the Turks charged right over the crest and tried to gain the great gully south of Rhododendron Ridge, evidently with the intention of forcing their way between our lines and the Anzac position. But they had reckoned without our artillery and the ship's guns.

This great charge of four successive lines of infantry in close formation was plainly visible to all our war-

ships and to all our batteries on land in this section. The Turks were caught in a trap. The momentum of their charge downhill prevented them recoiling in time, and they were swept away by hundreds in a terrific storm of high explosives, shrapnel, and common shells from the ships' guns, howitzers, and field pieces.

Never since the campaign started has such a target delighted the hearts of our gunners. As the huge shells from the ships exploded in their midst huge chunks of soil were thrown into the air, amid which you saw human bodies hurled aloft and then thrown to earth or into the deep ravines. But even this concentrated artillery fire might not have checked the Turkish advance unless it had been assisted by the concentrated fire of ten machine guns at short range.

For half an hour they maintained a rapid fire until the guns smoked with heat. During the whole of this time the Turks were pouring across the front in dense columns, attempting to attack our men occupying the farm. Hardly a Turk got back to the hills again. The lines got mixed up in a wedge as those in front tried to retire, while others pressed them from the rear. Some fled back over the crest, seeking to regain the trenches; others dashed downward to the ravines, where our shrapnel searched them out. In a few minutes the entire division had been broken up, the charge checked, and the survivors scattered everywhere.

Thus, if they succeeded in driving us from the crest of Chunuk Bair the Turks paid a terrible price for their success. The Turks certainly fought with desperate courage this day, evidently realising the precariousness of their position if we succeeded in retaking Chunuk Bair and the neck between it and Q Hill. They attacked in great strength all along the line our positions extending from Damakjelik Bair through Asma Dere and the spurs and the farm north-east of Rhododendron Ridge. At the latter point portions of our line were compelled to give ground, but the magnificent conduct of our officers saved the day.

#### GENERALS WITH RIFLES.

Generals and colonels fought with rifles and bayonets alongside their troops in the firing line. It was a fierce hand-to-hand struggle among the scrub through broken ground, in which no man knew how his comrade was faring. Many commanding officers were killed, including General Baldwin, who had throughout these four days set a splendid example to his men.

Gradually the enemy was driven back and the ground we had been obliged to abandon regained. Throughout the 10th the enemy continued his attacks with gradually lessening power, but could not force our men from their hard-won positions. At nightfall the fighting gradually died down from the sheer exhaustion of both armies and the consequent impossibility of any further physical effort.

#### ANZAC POST STRONGER.

The result of the operations in this section has greatly extended the Anzac position. The line now runs north until it joins up with the corps before Anafarta. We hold the foot hills and are established beneath the crest of Chunuk Bair, some way down it is true, at the top of the Rhododendron Ridge.

Here our men have securely dug themselves in, and await events with that complacency which is characteristic of the British and overseas soldier.

It only needed just a little of the dead weight of numbers to be removed for the Anzac Corps to have made good and consolidated that short and desperate grip it got on Chunuk Bair. Between our lines and the Turkish trenches you look out on a scene of desolation. The Turks lie in masses just as they fell or were thrown out of the trenches to make room for the living, while at one point I saw an over-sea soldier, an Englishman, a Maori, and a Gurkha all lying dead, side by side, marking the highest point yet reached by the Imperial force in the peninsula.

(To be Continued.)

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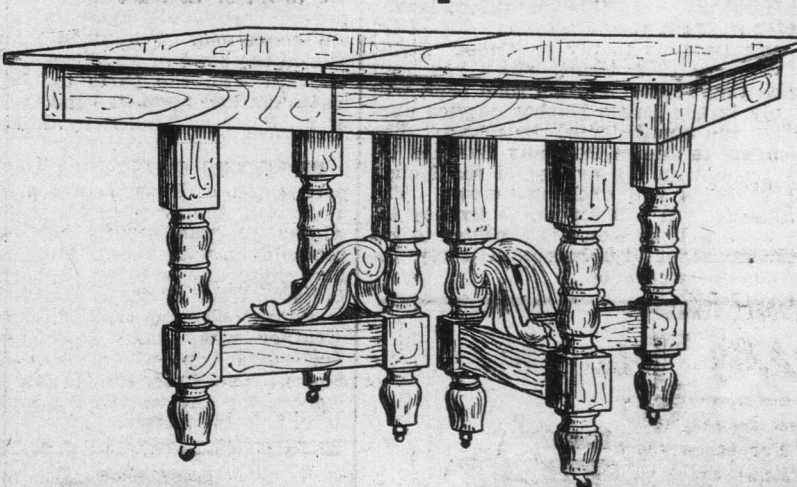
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