

Transcription of [AWM255 \[166\]](#)

AWM255 [166] [Written records, 1914-18 War, second series:] Report on operations at Anzac 25 April – 3 May 1915, officer commanding 3rd Brigade, Gallipoli (AWM2023.7.15)

This transcription was completed on 8 May 2023 by Stuart Bennington, Curator Official Records. It was then further edited on 11 May 2023 with the assistance of volunteers Ian Haidon and Steve Daniels. It represents the best interpretation of the handwritten document by (then) Col E G Sinclair-Maclaghan, CO of 3rd Australian Infantry Brigade. It is also possible that the document may actually have been written by (then) Captain A M Ross who was the staff Captain of the 3rd Brigade. The transcription was helped by the examination of the original War Diary of 3rd Infantry Brigade:

AWM4 23/3/1 Part 1 [AIF war diary:] 3rd Infantry Brigade - August 1914 - June 1915

Though the report does not appear on the War Diary, some of the entries are similar to entries in the daily narrative. The report represents an expanded version of the events between 25 April and 1 May as reported by Sinclair-Maclaghan. Some of the map references vary between the report and the War Diary narrative, and the report definitely contains more information than the War Diary for the dates covered.

The copy that is held by the Memorial is a carbon copy, possibly the 2nd carbon. Meaning that there were two layers of carbon paper and paper between the original and the pages used. It looks as though a pencil was used for the original and that in some places a fair amount of pressure was applied allowing for a good carbon copy. However in other places the pressure applied was much less, resulting in poor carbon transfer. For this reason much of the text is indistinct. The perforations at the left hand side suggest the pages were from a tear out notebook. The act of tearing the pages out of the notebook appears to have resulted in the loss of the bottom left hand corners of the document. The whereabouts of these missing corners is unknown and it is unlikely they were donated with the document.

A note on format. The transcription has been formatted so as to match the original as much as possible. Where the page has been torn and is missing [tear in page] is included. Where the original text was either missing, partial or indistinct a best guess based upon cross reference to the War Diary has been included in italics. Where it was impossible to make a best guess question marks are been placed.

The “D.R.L. No. 645” on the top right of the first page of the report are not part of the original document, they are the Donated Records Library number, which more properly should read 2DRL/645. It was allocated by the Memorial when the document originally came into the Memorial’s Library collection in 1934.

The full provenance of the original donation was that 2DRL/645 comprised about 22 items, ranging from memoranda through to maps and even a metal sign. The donation came from LT Col A M Ross, who had served as the staff Captain for 3rd Australian Infantry Brigade during the landings at Gallipoli. The donation was received on 19 February 1934. After this the various items were placed in their relevant collections. The report by Sinclair-Maclaghan was placed in the Libraries general documentary holdings. During the 1980s when the Memorial’s library was restructured to become the modern Research Centre many of these mixed holdings were placed aside for further cataloguing at a later date. The report is one such item, which was finally fully accessioned in 2023.

Stuart Bennington

**Curator Official Records
Research Centre
Australian War Memorial**

12 May 2023

Report 3rd Bde

April 25th

4.15am Battleship tows began to land under fire to N of GABA TEPE between squares 224 L & G
The landing was opposed by rifle fire from Small trenches N & S & a few look out posts on 224 H1 & a gun from Sq 212 G7
The heights just inshore were immediately rushed.
9th Bn landed on right then 10th. 11th on left and
12th Bn in close support distributed behind other 3 Bns.

4.25am Destroyer tows landed under rifle fire and M
Gun fire - distance rowed about 150 yds

Note should be made here of the great hospitality &
[tear in page] *assistance* rendered to troops in battleship tows by
[tear in page] ??? QUEEN, LONDON, PRINCE OF WALES, of
[tear in page] ..??? and collaboration of the 7 destroyers
[tear in page] inshore & of the efficiency and pluck
[tear in page] of HM's steamboat and boats crews.

[tear in page] *Whole* Brigade ashore

[tear in page] ??? and some 10th rushed for line

[tear in page] R 4 to I

(2)

9th Bn veered off to S E

Bulk of 10th reaches about I5.

11th Bn charged H1 & then made for Sq. C

Several detached parties carried through
to line T.P.K. & afterwards could not maintain
this.

Thus, at above time, general line was

Sq 224 M, H, B.

6 am. Portions of units began to dig in & make
good latter line. Other parties advanced
eastward. the whole Bde was very mixed.
A party of 9th and 10th put 3 Krupp guns
out of action near square 224 R5

6-7am Advanced parties received heavy counter -
- fire - driven in gradually on to Spur
400 where reorganising of remainder and digging
in was being carried out ? Bde *around* owing
to scattering of units & unexpected strength of opposition.

[tear in page] 8.05-8.15am. 1st Counter Attack by enemy repulsed, with

[tear in page] aid of 2nd Bde on right & units of

[tear in page] 1st Bde on right & left.

[tear in page] xxx fire swept heavily over Spur 400

[tear in page] units in ~~to reverse crest~~ from forward

[tear in page] to centre of plateau

[tear in page] Bde just holding on to general position

[tear in page] Square 224 N to I

(3)

25th (Con)

Positions maintained with difficulty.

3 – 4 pm

2nd Counter-attack by enemy.

Heavy fighting – Bde supported by
one mountain Battery & ships guns
Counter attack held off.

4pm

Enemy fire dies down under ships' fire

Note

Spotting for ships supporting Bde was
done by Lts Clowes and Vowles at Bde
Hdqrs - along Bde Signal line &
Naval base station. Considerably excellent
work was done.

Bde Hdqrs position Sq 224 I5.

5 – 6pm

3rd Counter attack by enemy. heavy
M guns and severe shelling of Spur
400 positions. No ground given on any
portion of line

[tear in page] General Bde order to dig in and hold

[tear in page] on for the night - at all costs -

[tear in page] Especially good work in communication

[tear in page] both by beach parties carrying up

[tear in page] ??? & also by Indian mule

[tear in page] Transport.

(4)

Night April 25/26th.

All night local attacks by enemy and
much sniping

Some of the Bde were relieved at about 8pm
from the trenches. Impossible to extract
the majority

Note 1 It should be recalled that the men landed
in full marching order, carrying 1 day's
ration and 2 iron rations-also that the
majority landed in 2 foot of water - thus
adding great weight.

2 Packs were slipped on the beach - & in
many cases did not reach owners for
5 to 7 days & some not at all.

3. Not a single round was in a rifle
going ashore - it was pure bayonet
work till broad daylight.

4 Throughout the afternoon repeated
attempts were made to throw men in
to grip the eastern edges of Spur 400.

All were frustrated by shrapnel
fire from about Pt 971.

[tear in page] The leading & intercooperation of Companies

[tear in page] Platoons was a feature of the operations.

[tear in page] men showed great dash & gallantry –

[tear in page] *which* more than repaid the time spent

[tear in page] the training of smaller units.

(5)

April 26th.

Hdgrs and Signal Sec at Sq 224 I5

Positions maintained

am

Heavy firing throughout morning.

New machine gun crossfire brought to
bear at Spur 400

A few more details relieved. These plus
details relieved overnight reformed on
beach. Water & ammunition replenished

3Pm

The above party (about 900 strong) came up
in support of 15th. Other Bns about
Square 224 M6. These men were
thrown in at various points, along the
line where heavily pressed.

4:30-5:30pm

A slight general advance was made
by us on plateau 400 but was driven
back by heavy machine gun fire &
heavy shrapnel fire.

[tear in page] 6.00pm Original line still held intact but

[tear in page] the intermingling of units was worse

[tear in page] than ever (*se opp cite 3pm*).

[tear in page] NZ Bns came into line on left at

[tear in page] *Square C*

[tear in page] Hdqrs relieved by 1st Bde Hdqrs.

[tear in page] *Details* of 3rd Bde passing under command of 1st Bde

(6)

April 27th.

6am Bde ordered into reserve at southern end of landing place.
About half the survivors only complied, the remainder could not be spared from various points in the general firing line.

April 28th

Bde still resting collecting on beaches.
Rolls called casualties compiled etc
Morning Several congratulatory messages were received & read to the ranks
4.30pm 100 men each of 9th and 12th Bns were suddenly ordered to reinforce the centre of the firing line & were distributed over ground held by the 4th Bde.
Some of these men had only just returned
[tear in page] from the trenches & on going back to
[tear in page] *firing* line were not again relieved till
[tear in page] May.

(7)

April 29th.

Rest in bivouac about Square 224 M8.

A few casualties from overshots.

The approximate strength of the Bde at this time was 1600 all ranks.

April 30th

8.30am

Bde moves to relieve 8th & 4th Bns in the trenches - general positions as follows

9th 224 Q8 and 224 R7

11th 224 R7 and 224 R5

12th 225 R5 and 224 R3

15th in reserve on beach

Bde Hdqrs Sq 224 R5

Men from original attack and trenches still coming in.

The general disorganisation of units is explained

- i by the necessity of landing in small parties on a wide front
- ii by the nature of the ground which necessitated units moving up in single file

[tear in page] by the rapidity of advance being essential

[tear in page] necessity of pushing in small units as

[tear in page] arrived here & there - to relieve great

[tear in page] ???? on various points weakly held.

[tear in page] be made of the excellent work done

[tear in page] by the medical officer & stretcher bearers.

May 1st

10thBn relieves 9th in trenches.

A very quiet day.

Trenches improved & traversed.

Sap-heads commenced & wire entanglements
run out

Patrols sent out at nightfall 500' to
front failed to find enemy or trenches.

A little sniping

Artillery communications to 3rd AFA Bde & there
to covering ships.

Arty support *to section 4* 18 pr guns & covering
Cruisers.

Total Casualties in Brigade - operations April 25

to May 1st 1915

	<u>Killed</u>	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Missing</u>
Officers	18	44	3
Other Ranks	<u>171</u>	<u>863</u>	<u>771</u>
Totals	<u>189</u>	<u>907</u>	<u>774</u>

[tear in page] of the 'missing' it is feared that the larger

[tear in page] *number* are Killed

S.G. Sinclairmaclagan Col.

Cmdng Third INF BDE

3rd May 1915

Notes on last page of:

AWM255 [166] [Written records, 1914-18 War, second series:] Report on operations at Anzac 25 April – 3 May 1915, officer commanding 3rd Brigade, Gallipoli

The last page of the report of (then) Col E G Sinclair-Maclaghan, CO of 3rd Australian Infantry Brigade, does not appear to be part of the overall report. It appears to be some notes made by either Sinclair-Maclaghan or Captain A M Ross and was dated 15 May, presumably in 1915.

The page appears to be either a first or second carbon copy, and due to the different paper and perforations to those of the eight pages that make up the report must have come from a different notebook. The handwriting and writing style is the same as that on the report and therefore the page would appear to be from Sinclair-Maclaghan. Unfortunately the top left of the page is missing and a few of his words are therefore lost. Several words appear to have been pencilled in later, possibly to make clear words that were indistinct due to poor carbon transfer. An x has been pencilled in the margin to the left of the sentence reading "Look after their rifles & equipment badly -" it is not known why, possibly to make particular note of this sentence. The date May 15 is pencilled under the bulk of the text, possibly to date the entry. If this is the case the notes were made about three weeks into the Gallipoli campaign.

It is not known if these are Sinclair-Maclaghan's own thoughts on Australian soldiers or if he was taking notes from a meeting. It is possible they are the thought of Captain A M Ross the 3rd Brigade's staff Captain. Given the date of the notes purports to be three weeks into the Gallipoli campaign, as a Brigade commander (or staff Captain) they would have had time to form opinions of their own. However it is not possible to determine entirely the purpose of the notes.

Stuart Bennington

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Research Centre
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12 May 2023

Notes on the Australian Soldier.

[Part of page missing] A *skilled* fighter – an indifferent shot

[Part of page missing] ?e physique & endurance –

Well mannered – swears dreadfully.

Extraordinarily patient under mismanagement, under bad officering & bad administration.

Hopelessly untidy & unmethodical.

Splendid diggers.

Considering what great meat-eaters they are they stick to rations wonderfully.

Very bad at patrol work as a whole.

Can look after themselves well as regards cooking & have great personal cleanliness (given the water).

Learn v quickly.

[Pencilled “x”] Look after their rifles & equipment badly –

Well spoken & charming men to talk with -

[Pencilled “May 15.”]