1915

Dear Hal, Sunday, 1 P.M.

--- more reliable of my men. The others were scattered in the bushes near by some of them too far to hear to the
be able to hear or understand my orders.

When I found that we were not in touch with any
giving line reading remissibility we set to work to find
the units who were firing at us and I carefully
searched the landscape with no success except
that far away on the left side about 1800 yards I noticed
we could see the actual figure that were firing at us - the
cannoned pit - the flash and burst of the
explosion and the turning forms - lower down the
slope among some trees on the left front about 1300 yards
away were some infantry moving forward in
shuffling formation - we fired two more canister
shells at them but could not see where the shells
hit but we made the infantry run and we fired for
at 1200 yards until they all got to
cover - still in further orders from Major Baker who
was about 50 to 60 yards away on my right, and
with whom I kept constant in touch by calling my
head till I caught his eye. Then just in front I saw
an abandoned Turkish trench which offered some
cover and trusted my men and then which was
a mistake because although offering cover for the
tower part of the body, it was a horse commandant
in the green hillside and very accurate ranged on
by the enemy, realizing my mistake I moved
the men out of it again, just before, without a
Casualty until the bushes a little to the right front.
Still no cover, still no firing line to reinforce, still
nothing to do but lie and be glad at (God
Heaven). About this time Joe Beale was
hit on a joint of his right hand by a shell it
pellet - he was lying on my right side
and he cursed very volubly and began

- began - to explore me to do something rather than
the less and be murdered, which was exactly
what I wanted myself - I took the precaution
of again asking Major Baker if there were any further
orders and the answer was no - I believe that
he was still waiting for a message from the right point
where A & B. Cos were supposed to be. I moved
forward again by me or two short rushes still
in the direction of the Knoll on the right of Owen's Survey
and came almost to the edge of the gully - about this
time word was passed along the line that Major Baker was
wounded - I called out to him but got no reply and
as I seemed to be the only officer in charge of the company
I decided to go to him at once and get his orders.

I know now that he painted - hence his silence. This involved
moving by myself across the point and in full view of the
machine guns in the gully. I carried out two short
rushes all night the bullets just sang over my head
each time I dropped - the third rush the summer followed
me around and hinted me through my left thigh
knocking me round and bringing me down like a lack
t of pain. I felt a little way down the hill and called
out to Bailey this was nearest to me that I was hit
and to set in touch with an officer on the right.
I felt the blood pumping out my leg but the thought
of dying from haemorrhage some how never occurred to
me to put in a tourniquet. Couldn't have done so
if I had thought of it as it is almost impossible
for a patient to stop his own femoral artery.
I remember feeling a bit dizzy but did not know
I faint less but think it might be because Bailey
told me in 1917 that when I had him know but re
crewed to the edge of the gully and called for
me but put no answer. When recovered from
the initial shock I found that my whole
Dear [Name],

I fell in a shell blast and had to lie down on the ground. My right leg was paralyzed, probably from shock. I felt it pretty carefully and found it was not broken as I thought at first. I started to crawl in the direction where I was last seen Private Baker. I was not sure where he was going, but on my way I saw Sergeant Cattan (Commander of No. 4 platoon) with a medical party of about twenty men. I asked him if he wanted to carry me (probably looked a good deal worse than I felt) and we went forward into the heavily wooded hill to the right of our field of fire, and found there a few stragglers from various battalions and brigades but no group like After defensive or offensive and no enemy only some shell and a stream of machine gun fire whenever you showed in the open. The casualties were heavy and I was not able to carry the poor wounded to a place of safety.

I shall close and send Letter 1 as it is.

(Handwritten note: Dear Letter 1 and will put it as it is at the next post.)
Diary of A. P. Denham (3rd Battalion Australian Imperial Forces abroad commencing on the last day of March, 1915)

Up to the end of March, 1915 my diary is fairly fully kept in a little red note book now in a box at home (I think in my war relics box) about this time the 3rd Bn received definite orders to prepare for embarkation and on the first Sunday in April we struck Camp cleaned up the battalion lines and marched out of camp about 5pm with all regimental transport and baggage. We marched from Mena Camp to Cairo station a distance of ten miles or more and quite trying on hard roads with extra heavy equipment. — Remember as we passed Mena House Hospital I saw Agent R. J. Murray St. Ron in a tunic and broke all rules by leaving the ranks to shake hands with him — he had been invalided out of the 3rd Bn with Blackwater Fever contracted on service with the Horsets in East Africa in pre-war days.

* The next time I saw this officer was in 1917 when he was a Colour-Corporal he enlisted in 3rd Reinforcements and going to the front again — poor little chap.

The march into Cairo was not very eventful. I was in Command of my own platoon, and remember having trouble with one privates Morris a newly joined replacement - a tall lean bearded man (who usually make splendid soldiers in the field but are a nuisance when they can get drunk and Morris was no exception) he was very drunk in a mandarin kind of way, and after dropping him along for some time I put him on a train with an escort. We arrived at Cairo station and the battalion entrained uneventfully. Managed to get a little sleep on the hard floor of a corridor and woke up in the grey dawn as we were nearing Alexandria - the desolate reeds of the Nile marshes on our left and some typically desolate Egyptian tenement houses skirting the lines on the right - all the desolation I felt when first leaving Alexandria for Cairo in the dusk of faint, December 1914 came back but was relieved by the sense that we were approaching the sea and the feeling that whatever the coming fate it would be in the sweet open air and near a sea shore.

We embarked on H.M.A.T. Nuvina belonging to a transatlantic cargo line - she was
A cargo carrier, pure and simple—a new boat about 7,000 tons very seaworthy. The men of 1st Battalion were accommodated on the deck below. The horses roamed the hold—aft which was not an ideal arrangement by any means. The only accommodation was that of the ship's officers which was stretched to accommodate some of the more semi-battalion officers. We had on board the 51st Battalion officers, men, horses, and transport. The 1st Transport and horses of the rest of the 2nd Bde. A headquarters wireless unit, a section of a field ambulance, and some other odds and ends which I cannot remember. A & B companies were accommodated aft and C & D (mine and the one containing the Public School boys) were forward. The junior officers dropped themselves about on the deck over the officers quarters as best they could, and I personally was quite cosy in my Valise. We sailed the same day and headed in a southerly direction by ourselves and without any convoy—the last of the 1st Bde units to leave Alexandria. By this time the rumour had it that we were bound on an expedition to the neighbourhood of Saida. Mumrither, it was uncertain whether the landing was to be made in Palestine, Alexandretta, or...
Dear [Name],

1915

As soon as we got to sea, however, it became pretty definite that our object was Gallipoli. We had a most delightful voyage up the Aegean - blue skies and distant mountains were the purple morns transparent might - there was plenty to do in a very small space - final touches to put on the training of the men - particularly in rapid loading, unloading, and firing with which Maj. Salen was an expert. The decks were further reduced by the presence of four large "home boats," or larger for the rapid landing of horses, guns, or men. There was some guard work also and night duty in the midnight hours when the fields were over and in the wonderful grand dawn - as all the morning seemed to breathe the peace and war seemed very far away. On the blue afternoons used to lean over the prow and look down into the blue waters - blue with a deep changing undesignance which I have never seen in Southern Waters. A quartermaster of the ship (sailor) - a hardy Welshman, practised - lent me a copy of Talgarth's Golden Treasury Vol. 1, which I devoured (may or may I had left in Egypt) - we used to have our meals in the Delaps, senior officer's first and the cooks second - very hearty meals - food solid and wholesome food - not McNeal's hash for breakfast.
May 1915 Letter Page 5.

--prognostications and we were well looked after by
the ship's people. Indeed weather was only a bit
less in Jennis Harbour, it was pretty miserable
because there was really no where to go to keep
dry and to be on duty, meant to be wet through.

--to continue -- after about three and a
half days and we entered Madras harbour on the Island
of Lemnos on a beautiful blue day and we were
not alone then -- the third brigade were aboard
there on shore and had been for some weeks and
there were ships, small ones and big merchantmen,
transports, and they including the latest super-
dreadnought -- the Queen Elizabeth just back from the
bombardment of the Dardanelles. There were some
big vessels there including the Themistocles, a cruiser,
but I don't think any of the destroyers had arrived
then. There were some very beautiful and fast
Turkish battleships there with British troops aboard.

After day by day more ships arrived and the
word of footnotes regiments being aboard and chews
then as we passed -- the bad weather set in and
we learned that our expedition had been postponed
for days at least -- we lay at anchor for more
than ten days and had a very monotonous time
better only by training practice which involved
warming up on the decks of our ship in full
fighting equipment into taking horse boots and
harness and being hauled ashore where we left.
Nearly 9.30 A.M.

leapt into the boiling surf, and rushed up to the shore in a pelting hail of bullets (imaginary).

On this beautiful day, we arrived at the most complete of these practices and the whole battalion landed and took part in manoeuvres which included the battalions and moved onto marches along strange tracks.

Among the most striking were winding fields and one, known as a semi-green earth, where we could see the sun-lit hillsides of Somme and St. Omer and further to the right, on the far horizon, the deep canal near Ypres, the haunt of our adventure. We went back to the boat tired and happy and with a strong sense of the greatness of the Spring earth and the sweetness of life—towards the end of one day the staff and commanding officers went for a cruise on the Queen Elizabeth along the East which we were going to attack. When they came back and saw George Tape's (our machine gun officer) colouring his maps (or filling in different heights above sea level in different colours—imaginary maps so coloured to suit at home). And indeed that he started his work in the region of what was later LUCC: Cove. —It was the first and did likewise and even went to the trouble of copying the same area of map with my
Dear 9/15  Letter (Page).

field Service Pocket book (now at home).

The last few days at Lemnos were spent in making
great preparations for the landing — lightening
my equipment by discarding non essentials
— buying a 'delightful Napoleon waterproof overcoat
which was as light as a feather and pocket up
in pocket size. Thus I lost on the first day.

Incidentally, I caught a very severe cold which
made me feel miserable as it seemed not likely to
 spoil my chances of “carrying on”. As shaped to do.

However on the second last night I went to bed
with fever, powder, aspirin, and a large hot
churn of whisky and lime juice — with excellent
results — in one face time we used to
play bridge or poker in the shell house —

Capt. Adams [since killed in the flying corps].

Sgt. Weather. [Killed at Cape Helles 8 May].

Sgt. McLean. [Killed at Helles].

[Mr. Yeat. Serving at Vancouer, Victoria].

myself being the chief performer. — Our last scene
is somewhere in my F.S. Pocket book — on the
last night of all (I had been an all day sitting
of a Court martiax or a battalion cook for poisoning
at “crowns and cadies”) I was detailed as
officer of the guard which meant goodbye to
all sweet sleep. I protested as there were other officers
Dear 1915 letter | Page 8

Fussie - on board who were not to make the landing. Major Sake arranged with Colonel for me relief and I went back on the top deck at 10 pm while we were going in a hidden bay at Imbros and slept till 2 am when reveille was announced by my bugler rolling me over. I awoke on the morning of Sunday 25 April 1915 - to a beautiful night with a silver moon behind diffusing soft clouds and a thin sea mist clinging and obscuring everything. We were moving slowly in a somewhat North-easterly direction - no land in sight and the dim ill-defined shapes of our consort ships looming nor tread their way through the mist. I had a good talk, changed into clean underclothes, had a good breakfast of porridge and eggs and bacon, packed my kit including a bread and jam sandwich "lunchbox" (which was never eaten). At about 7:30 am we slowed up just in sight of dear hills ahead and one by one the other vessels slipped alongside into place. Just as the first streaks of dawn were appearing in the east the third brigade went ashore and through the sky momentary there were flashes of rifle and machine gun fire and the Turkish battery at Saba Tepe opened fire shelling the beach and approaches with high-angled shrapnel. At first no return was discernible but as dawn broke we were just able to distinguish the men of the third brigade scaling the cliff ahead of us. At about this time our naval guns which had been searching the coast above the beach was lifted and directed more against the batteries and the cruiser Basshante sailed right into the bay north of Saba Tepe and bombarded the battery there with her big guns - at point blank range - seemingly enough to blow the whole point to pieces let alone the little field battery which was doing such terrible execution among our landing parties but no - the battery was well hidden.
March 1915 Letter 1 Page 9

...in a howitz and our naval shells passed overhead or burst harmlessly in the mounds in front. Thus a naval armament which seemed at first capable of making us landmine operations easy was proved to our and even afterwards incapable of doing much damage to well placed land defences.

While this was going on we on the "Norrian" had long been prepared for our own landing. That was delayed for some unknown reason—our Brigade and the staff had come aboard the day before and were to be among the first to land. The order of companies was to be D, B, C, F, B, and A. The latter was to go up ahead with A Company. While we were waiting for our turn of boats to come for us we were getting in the upper decks—the men in the rigging watching the great panorama scene which revealed so interesting and thrilling and not really dangerous. We were one of the nearest boats to the shore and Saba Lake sallying commenced to drop shrapnel overhead. The shells fortunately coming harmlessly among the rigging and on the decks—all the same the men were ordered below and the officers withdrew under the shelter of the deck house. At this time something amusing happened to me.

I had been watching the events on shore through powerful glasses and all at once I saw a host of bamysh figures and from the plain near Saba Lake and rush headlong towards our fellows on the head. "There they are," I yelled excitedly, believing the whole Turkish army was about to set upon our unsuspecting comrades on shore when I took down my glasses and saw that it was an illusion—the old Norrian was backing with all speed out. I decided...
against the scattered bushes on this had
appeared to make the Battle Spring to life in the
vegetation. My glasses and were in the opposite direction.
Some mistake caused some amusement and
its discovery caused me much relief. At about
this time our tow came in sight and I began to
pull my platoon in to disengage. A 2 B Companies
were already leaving and I was given in charge of
the first half of C Company together with the M.I. gun section
Major Baker following in a late “tow” with the
remainder of the company. My last few minutes
on board were spent in locking the rifles for Major Davenport and
Captain Howland (both killed on 25/4/15)
where our rifles were (I believe) taken by members of the
crew to run up to Ireland’s gun. A common practice on
troopships, and also in hunting in one of my
best N.C.O.s, T. B. Smith, I now in the Repatriation department
who was found of knowing the situation through his glasses.
on the bridge—no time to curse or blame him though
I was very annoyed. We set into the boats and
made little of the deck waved me a “good luck.”
Our trip to the shore was executed without mishap
though several bursts of shrapnel aimed at us burst
just over head and a few rifle bullets flashed
over the water. We landed comfortably on a shingle
beach, at a spot which was I think just at the
Southern end of ANZAC Cove (see sketch) and I
formed my platoon up in two ranks as close to the
Shelter of the low cliff as I could though they were
by no means safe from shrapnel there.
I myself walked down a plank onto the stone with
a sailor holding my hand. Most of the men who
actually landed with me will be found in a black
notebook (which I left at home).
I myself had felt over my nervousness at that time
and had not yet begun to feel the sensation
of fear which knowledge brings.
Dec. 1915 Letter I Page 2

Skeleth on P.11.

I was just going along to the left to report all correct,
to Col. Wambliks (men taken being out and come
a little) when General Bridges came running down the
hill among the trees above my position - very real and
cheery, waving his cane and called out to the Co.
"Wambliks! I want you to get your men together and
renforce the firing line with all available tools and
ammunition - don't wait for the rest of yours. Report
and don't want to get into formation but push on!"

Immediately after this I made my report to Col Wambliks who
was already ordering A, B Companies & more off.
Col Wambliks ordered me to join A Company (Major Feltons)
at once and pace my platoon under his orders. I just
had time to give the order "form up, let him alone,
crouch march." When the head of A Company moving past
I joined on to C Co. and we toiled up the steep difficult hill along a sort of track half
beaten with jungle, higher, with full equipment, etc. etc., the men
were a little bit inclined to curse and sweat in the now warm sun and it was difficult to
keep them together in the narrow paths and at the
came time keep up with the head of the Column.

It was a beautiful day - we were out of danger from
shrapnel behind a hill and the "up". The sun bullets
were singing softly and harmless even on their heads,
aiding out with the summer sun like humming bees.
The thought of danger or coming horrors only the necessity
of astounding what was to be done and the anxiety
at being thus long separated from my own beloved company
leaders. We toiled over a couple of head and running ridges
and across two water courses afterwards famous as "Monarch
Gull," and "Bridges Track" and as we began to ascend
the second rise at "K" the order was given to chief para
which we gladly did. Major Feltons then moved to a point "F"
high on the ridge and sent out scouts to reconnoitre
and runners to get in touch with the bluffs. I settled
my men along on the ridge and joined them on a high.
high—earthly kind of overlooking the beach and the sea
and what a wonderful sight it was when all
apparent peace only marred by the still beautiful
puff of white smoke as demoral smell and the
shouting occasional whistling for shining bullets over
head—and then the air was full of these—still no
sense of danger and very little nervousness. Here we had
a little discussion and I discovered that, to turn
had been our movement that the exact position of
the troops we were to reinforce was not known—only the
general direction—our scouts had never come back
and word came from the rear that we were to push
without waiting. B Company were halted a
little to the left and also in column of route, and
and was passed to me that the remainder of C
Co., under command of Major Baker, had arrived
in the valley below and Major Baker sent orders to
me that I was to advance my platoon in the same
general direction as A and B Companies and that
he would follow me—I therefore pushed a (along
detached track) up towards the head of the full keeping
the left flank on my right—and I near the
crest I slowed down the head of the column and
peered two scouts. The parson (since killed) and
was Smith (bounced first day) ahead to see if I could
locate our front line but the country was so difficult
and the messages from the rear to press on were so
insistent that I found myself leading the company
over new ground ahead of my own scouts—all this
was bad tactics and I knew it but was powerless
to prevent it and probably Major Baker in his
turn was pushed on by someone on the beach who
was still in charge and knew what he was doing. At this time
the bullets had begun to rain and even the last between
Company A in Column of yours over a steep line within

1915 Diary Page 13, Letters (marked F in sketch)
Close range of enemy machine guns whatever the orders from the rear. I therefore halted the head of the column not far out over about four hundred yards and sent a foot patrol back to Major Saker to explain the position and went to the crest to have a look (what I saw is shown in the next sketch) and saw nothing but bushes and crumpled hills and pillaging until a link in a trench; our rifle fire made me an Australian — only bullets whistling through the air (heard but not seen) and an occasional burst of shrapnel on the ridge on my left and right. I went back immediately and reported to Major Saker who had by this time of the company close up under the crest but still in column of fours. Sounds of firing broke out about a quarter past one o'clock and I think the received a message from the Company asking for support on the right. At all events he gave the word to advance and the whole Company moved over the crest and my platoon led off as we support the crest man John pushed out in front and gave the word to advance to the right so that my platoon became the left of the line opposite the top of a hill, the rest of the Company strung out to the right in the direction of Long Ridge. Then the storm burst. The British guns on Sun Ridge had us in full view at close range of a range and they pumped it into us and the machine guns situated on some hill above us fired full and furious with flash, smoke and machine; powder cartridges came in and fortunately the shrapnel was poor stuff and the missus fired at a little too high. At all events the word was given to be once and advance to short rushes. I told my section Commanders to take their men forward to the ridge on the right in a line and the first advance towards the hill. The machine gun was a method used by Major Saker himself and was used under for the first time. I don't know whether many of my men were hit among these branches or whether their hearts failed them but I do know that when we had advanced half way down the forward slope there were with me only my NCO's and a few of the
Sketch of what I saw when I came over the ridge above Owen's Gully and commenced to advance towards the ridge near Lone Pine.

- Turkish Battery
- Owen's Gully
- Big Valley
- Thick scrub-like tree
- (Later) Lone Pine
- Small Cultivated field
- Small Cultivated field with poppies
- Abandoned Turkish Trench
- Baby 700
- Knoll
- Laver Johnston's Jolly
- Owen's Gully
- Plain
- Bushes
- Small Dressing hut