

Historical Officers Report

Events of the Great War as reported in the Camden News
Cables from the European War **MARCH 1916**

2nd March

The Verdun offensive has eclipsed all other topics in France, but the country is watching events with unconquerable confidence. The enemy massed 200,000 men on a front of seven miles being at a rate of 16 men per yard. The battle has now lasted three days, and has not produced an appreciable effect on the French position.

The Government of Portugal suddenly seized 30 Austrian and German vessels, which have been in the Tagus since the War began. The Portuguese flag was hoisted on them, and the crews landed.

A batch of Australians connected with one of the siege batteries has left for the western front.

9th March

Douaumont Fort is reported to have been taken and retaken four times. Two thousand Germans still hold the interior of the fort. It is said that they have been caught like rats in a trap.

The Zeppelins which raided England on Saturday night flew over several counties and dropped 40 bombs. A great deal of damage was done to houses and buildings, and 12 persons were killed and 33 injured. In Yorkshire half clad people fled from their houses into a heavy snowstorm.

Mr, Martin Donohoe states that the rank and file of the army at Smyrna is in favour of the Allies. Food is short in Turkey, and thousands are starving. An, Athens message states that the Turks are short of uniforms and Utilising German uniforms and Australian uniforms taken from Anzac.

16th March

The third phase of the battle opened on Sunday, when a terrible artillery duel commenced on the west bank of the Meuse (France). The woods were levelled and the Forges Brook ceases to run, shell bursts having dammed the stream in six places. The crest of Hill 213 was blown away to a depth of 30 feet. The main French position at Goose hill is still untouched but the Germans by taking shelter in ravines managed to force their way up a narrow country lane leading to the top of the hill, jeopardising the extreme French right at Goose hill. It is believed that the German plans miscarried through the Crown Prince's vanity and obstinacy.

A fleet of at least 50 German warships is reported to have been sighted off Terschelling North Sea, on Monday afternoon.

An artillery officer stated that during the first days of the bombardment of Verdun 80,000 shells fell in a single sector. Germany he further stated, that lost 80,000 killed.

A Berlin message announces that Germany has declared war on Portugal owing to the seizure of interned German vessels. The war strength of the Portuguese armies is about 150 000 raised by conscription. The Fiscal Guard is a preventive service of about 5200 strong. Portugal says: "We will not conclude a separate peace."

Sergeant Cliff Hanlon, an old Camden boy, has returned from the seat of war, after having six months experience as a member of the 1st Australian Light Horse at Gallipoli. Some three weeks before the evacuation he was wounded by shrapnel in the mouth and also contracted a fever, he was then taken to Alexandria Hospital and afterwards to No.1 General Hospital, Heliopolis, and when fit to travel returned to Australia with the batch of wounded that arrived at Sydney on Saturday last. He was in Camden on Tuesday, staying with Mr. F. W. Sluman. Sergt, Hanlon says he is feeling fit once more and anxious to return to active service.

20th March First Anzac Corps begin landing in France



23rd March

Lord Sandhurst stated in the House of Lords that hundreds of thousand steel helmets have been issued by the Government. Every Tommy would be helmeted as soon as possible.

According to the Paris correspondent of the 'Daily News'. The German losses at Verdun exceed 300,000. It is estimated *that* the Germans at Verdun employed 3000 guns, including 16 inch Howitzers throwing projectiles a ton in weight. Five million shells were fired during the first fortnight, including 100,000 at Douaumont in 10 hours. German prisoners state that Verdun was to be the last great Battle

30th March

The steamer *Esperanza*, 7000 tons, bound to Constantinople laden with foodstuffs, and flying the German ensign, was torpedoed by this Russians. They also sunk 20 food laden sailors.

Lloyd's reports the "Galloper" lightship off Harwich has been torpedoed-and sunk.

Commenting on Australia's recruiting figures the "Daily Mail" says this magnificent achievement will thrill the Motherland with joy and pride,

As a result of the German defeat at Verdun Several Bulgarian regiments mutinied and massacred their officers.

The Admiralty announces that light cruisers and destroyers' escorted a squadron of sea-planes, which carried out a raid on the German air-sheds in Schleswig-Helstein. Three of the sea-planes are missing. The destroyer *Medusa*, it is feared was sunk after colliding with the British destroyer *Laverock*.

From the Home Front

MENANGLE NEWS.

Send-off to Recruits,

It has been decided to give tho local recruits a send-off On Saturday next, 4th March. A social gathering will take place in the hall, at which each of the eight volunteers will be presented with a souvenir.

Military Camp at Menangle

About 100 soldiers are at present preparing the site for the new encampment at North Menangle. It is considered an ideal position. Water is laid on from the Sydney water supply, and there is sufficient slope in the ground to give excellent drainage.

FROM THE FRONT.

Pte. Lloyd Kemp, for some time assistant at tho Commercial Bank, Camden, writes.

Driver Bob Sidman, says he was for eleven weeks at Quinn's Post, Gallipoli at the evacuation they were placed on board the battleships and immediately had hot coffee, fresh bread, butter, meat, and pickles served to them. "I don't mind telling you," he goes on to say, "We had a great feed."

The sailors couldn't do enough for us; they are great fellows, and the Australians who were on the Peninsula cannot speak too highly of them. We now are in the land of the living have to thank tho floating forts for our preservation.

We were landed in Lemnos and stayed there three weeks. We spent Christmas there and taking everything into consideration a very jolly one it was thanks to the people of Australia we had plenty of plum-duff and other delicacies.

Lemnos is very quiet and except for a few Greek villages there is nothing to see. We used to buy a lot of oranges, mandarins and tin fruits but of course we had paid pretty dearly for them.

After leaving Lemnos we went to Tel el Kebir in Egypt while there we camped on the battlefield of the same name, The trenches used in this battle; Which was fought in 1882, are still in very good order this is due I believe to them being preserved to a certain extent by the British Government.

We spent a very quiet time while we were there, but before very long there will be a small city there, just before we left there were shops of all descriptions going up.

From Tel el Kebir in Egypt, while there we camped I think we are going to stay for awhile. All our provisions, water, etc are brought to us by camels.

Pte. Kemp concludes his letter by expressing his regret at hearing of the death of Mr. Fox, he intends to write to Jack, and wishes to be remembered to all the boys, 'Buzzer,' and 'Brucky' included.

Ray Herbert
Historical Officer