

Year 6 Teacher Resource 7

Extracts from diaries and a letter on the ANZAC Landing and conditions at Gallipoli on April 25 1915

1. The ANZAC Landing - extracts from a letter written by Doctor Brennan to his wife.

The landing

".When we were lowering the oars to pull in the last 40 or 50 yards a single rifle shot rang out in the stillness, and everyone jumped about a foot off his seat.... within about five seconds the fire opened from the whole hill in front of us, and then a machine gun opened fire. I was in the second boat of the tow, and being a fairly light boat we ran well into the beach. The first boat of the tow was a big pinnace, and having 50 men on board she grounded a fair distance out, and when the troops got out they were up to their shoulders in water; we were only up to our waists. There were only a few casualties in our boats-the machine gun didn't get into it-but there were more in others... As you can imagine, there was no time wasted in getting out of the boats and across the beach (only about 15 yards wide), to the shelter of the bank; but even there we found we were not safe, as they were [firing at us] us from a bit of a cape about 200 yards to the south, so we had to crawl round until we found a little depression in the bank. Of course, all this was a matter of seconds. Soon there were a good number of men ashore. I heard an officer sing out "Fix bayonets, lads and up we go" and with a yell they started up the hill, which was very steep. They had to crawl up on hands and knees: More men were coming all the time, following the others up. "Suddenly the shrapnel started. They were firing from a battery on Gaba Tepe, a cape about 1½ miles south of us, and at once the battleships opened in return, and the din was tremendous. There seemed to be shrapnel bursting over and all round the boats. I was busy dressing all kinds of bullet wounds. An engineer was shot through the chest just beside me, and died in a few minutes. Suddenly there was a cheer from the top of the hill; our boys had captured the machine gun and driven the Turks out of their trenches. All this time there was not a rifle fired by our side. Coming ashore the rifles were not even loaded. I followed them up, dressing the wounded and leaving them to be picked up by bearers.

Food

I am writing this in my dugout and as there is a good deal of shrapnel kicking and whizzing about just outside us we are sitting tight. The food is pretty good; we have tinned meat, bacon, jam, cheese, and biscuits, besides tea and sugar, with rum twice a week; also spuds and onions. The chaps on the London have been great. Nearly every day a hamper comes over with bread, tinned milk, butter, cigarettes, tobacco, matches, chutney, sauce and chocolate, golden syrup, and bootlaces. So we are very happy; even when it rains we rig our waterproof sheets for a roof.

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/26948605>

Comment on Bravery by Brennan and Leane

Many of the boys have since stated that if any man ever deserved a Victoria Cross it was "Doc" Brennan, on this occasion. The co-operation of the Navy was also splendid, for without it and the cool judgment of Leane, the attack would not only have been a failure, glorious as it was, but it would have, meant that practically the whole party would have been wiped out.

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/44774198>

2. A short extract from the diary of Captain Berhardt (Boyce) Walther (11th Battalion)

Boyce's diary records the first day of the Gallipoli campaign.

"April 25th. Sunday. Boarded the destroyer and landed on the Gallipoli peninsula at four a.m. under heavy fire. Left pack on the beach and advanced about two miles with machine guns over heavy country. Entrenched on top of hill and got guns in position under exceptionally heavy fire. The bullets were whistling about us in thousands and raising the head even a few inches meant stopping one of the Turkish pills. It's a marvel how we got through".

Boyce rose through the ranks quickly. By March 1916 he had risen from private to captain. Boyce Walther was one of the last to leave Gallipoli during the evacuation and was then sent to Pozieres [in France on the Western Front]. He fought valiantly[bravely], but during an attack he was shot in the abdomen and given no chance of survival by [doctors]. He lingered and died three days later.

Captain Berhardt Hermann Walther was buried with full military honours. He was 21 years old.

<http://www.abc.net.au/local/audio/2014/05/16/4006229.htm>

3. Frederick Forrest diary entry for 25th April, 1915.

What a memorable day. At 1 a.m. we steamed out of Port Murdos for Anafarta Bay at which place we reached at 5 a.m. The warships had preceded us and had landed 3rd Infantry Brigade (Bde). The bombardment of the coast from the Dardanelles to the bay was tremendous. About 20 ships belching forth. All shore batteries were apparently silenced. Close in to discharge. Saw Infantry attacking hills... At about 9 a.m. a destroyer came alongside and ordered us to close in and informed us that Col. McClagan O/C [Commanding Officer] 3rd Infantry Bde. had captured 3 Krupp [German made] Guns. A great cheer went up.

At 9.30 a.m. the enemy's shore guns got our range. First shell struck torpedo boat 50 yards from us, just under the waterline. Next shell a few yards from us and the next two just over our bow. They had got the range and things looked very bleak for us. We received orders to get out of range... It was a narrow shave. A.11 lost several of her boats. All anxious to get ashore and help the infantry. We are the first artillery to go ashore. Enemy's battery causing trouble to our Infantry. Ships' guns cannot locate them. Bombardment tremendous. Our Infantry suffering terribly.

<http://www.amosa.org.au/schools/mhp/diaries/War%20diary%20-Frederick%20Forrest.pdf>

4. The following diary entries were written by an unnamed soldier from the 11th Battalion. Read the entries for the 24th to 28th April, 1915 at this site.

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/RCDIG1003299/?image=9&fullscreen=true#display-image>