



THE 4TH FIELD AMBULANCE DRESSING STATION AT GALLIPOLI, WITH SEVERAL GRAVES IN THE FOREGROUND, AUGUST OR SEPTEMBER 1915.

FOUR YEARS CAMPING

October 30th 1915.
Turk gave himself up, he stated Turkey was not feeding her troops in trenches. His statement was not in accordance with his looks as he looked physically fit & fine type of soldier, uniform was good.

October 31st 1915.
Church & communion.

Nov 2 1915.
Turks shelling of a night now.

Nov 5 1915.
Monotonous shelling.

Nov 1915.
Had letter from Perce.

Nov 1915.
Wrote to Mrs Fricker, Nan & Will.

Nov 12 1915.
Three more of our men killed by broom stick bomb at dressing station in Browns Dip, two wounded.

Nov 15th 1915.
Buried our dead in Browns Dip cemetery.

Nov 14 1915.
Turks troublesome shelling about our camp of a night now, church & communion this evening.

Nov 15 1915.
We are to shift our quarters to Monash Gully.

October 5th 1915.
Demonstration during the night, plenty of and bombing. poured about 50 shells into Cabor Tepo in very short space of time.

October 6th 1915.
Still more of our men being evacuated sick every day.

October 7th 1915.
Quite a lot of rumours floating about today in the camp.

October 10th 1915.
Three more of our corp wounded at Scots Point Dressing Station, Pte Kenny wounded very seriously.

October 11th 1915.
Heard there is not much chance of Pte Kenny recovering.

October 12th 1915.
Turkish prisoners doing fatigue work near our camp.

October 13th 1915.
Very busy sandbagging.

October 14th 1915.
Turks gave themselves up today, some by some regrettable mistake were shot as they left their trenches.

October 15th 1915.
Turkish aeroplane passed over, machine gun fire near our camp drove it away.

October 16th 1915.
Demonstration about 4 o'clock this morning nothing doing though.

October 17th 1915.
Two more men killed by Beachy today church survived.

October 19th 1915.
Heard Perce was wounded and evacuated.

October 24th 1915.
Church parade.

October 26th 1915.
Big bombardment from our war boats & field guns, hydroplanes manoeuvring about cruiser, Turks returned fire all along beach.

October 29th 1915.
At Lone Pine trenches this afternoon, our engineers blew up ... to prevent Turks sapping under our trenches. Some of our men went in before fumes had escaped and were overcome, relief parties went after them only to meet the same fate. Major, Lieutenant and six men died from effects, many were dazed but soon recovered after a rest.

MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL
6th Aust Field Ambulance
Corporal (L/Sgt) Leslie BURKE

Under all conditions, whether favourable or adverse, this N.C.O. is invariably cheerful and anxious to do everything in his power for the greater comfort of the men. He is always at great pains to get the best use out of, and make the greatest variety from, the available ration issue and all reports made from time to time by official cookhouse inspectors upon the state of cookhouses under his control have been of the very best. In active operations and especially during the period August 8th 1918 to October 6th 1918, the difficulty of providing hot food for personnel and wounded in forward ambulance posts has been very great and the fact that the supply has never failed is entirely due to the energy and excellent management of this N.C.O.

(Sgd) CHARLES ROSENTHAL
Major General, Commanding Second Australian Division.
Awarded January 30 1919



IN ALL WEATHER WITH NO END IN SIGHT

Nov 18 1915.
Put in many evenings now with Cyril White watching him sketching.

Nov 19th 1915.
Sent Christmas mail.

Nov 20 1915.
17th Army Service on beach in front of us were forced to shift their dump on account of Turks shell fire.

Nov 21 1915.
Pte Douglass standing in front of me today when bullet penetrated his shoulder.

Nov 22 1915.
Pte Douglass & Atkinson evacuated.

Nov 23 1915.
Dick Davidson killed while standing near the hospital, about 3 patients wounded.

Nov 24 1915.
Buried L Cpl Davidson in Browns Dip. He was about to be made a Staff Sergeant.

Nov 26 1915.
Shell landed a few inches away from our dugout, Dick Laurie & I were awakened & got a great fright.

Nov 27 1915.
Am packing to shift to Reinforcement Gully, sniping bad.

Nov 28 1915.
Dick Laurie went away, inches of snow everywhere, very cold, wrote letter to Nan for Dick to take.

Nov 29 1915.
Ten o'clock this morning Turks opened terrific bombardment, our camps, hospital tents were shelled down, one patient lying on stretcher was buried, Captain Green while operating on a man was killed. Major Johnson was killed, S. Sgt Foster wounded. Every available man has been out stretcher bearing. The cold is intense and we have been handicapped as there are only a few of our corp left now. Have just reported back from a hard long carry & have now to shift some more things to our other camp. It is now 9 P.M. & we have had the most awful day since landing here.

Nov 30 1915.
Sniping in Bridge Road & near tonight & we are still shifting, Pte W. Wood wounded today.

December 1 1915.
General expressed thanks for work our corp did through the last big bombardment ... & paid tribute to our fallen officers Major Johnson & Captain Green.

Dec 2 1915.
Have had no mail for a long time now.

Dec 3 1915.
Getting things fixed up again, plenty of work.

Dec 4 1915.
Noise from battery of 18 pounders near us is terrible, water very scarce, now getting water in ruts on road made by mule carts and drinking it. Also gathering ice and snow and letting it melt for water to drink and cook with.

Dec 5 1915.
Saw man blown to pieces near bank at Ridges Road, 3 wounded, Church Communion.

Dec 6 1915.
Aeroplane dropped bomb near our camp.

Dec 7 1915.
Turks shelling hill near us in search of Indian Battery that shells chess board. About 15 reinforcements came, some Ballarat boys among them.

Dec 8 1915.
Furious bombardment by our warboats, the very earth is trembling.

Dec 9 1915.
Captain Cordner has been evacuated, only leaving the Colonel and Q.M. of our original strength of officers. Many men are being evacuated through frost bite.

Dec 10 1915.
About 10 o'clock tonight received word to pack and be ready to embark first thing in morning, is now past midnight & still we are working, many are the rumours as to when we are going, mule transport took things to beach.

Dec 11 1915.
Fatigue party went down & loaded our things on the barges, after waiting on beach for sometime we were told to return to our old camp for the night.

Dec 12 1915.
Left for beach about 11 this morning, did fatigue loading stores on barges all day. At dusk we were supposed to get something to eat at a sort of Y.M.C.A. We were marched up to some place on the beach & order about turn given & marched back & on to a barge at Watsons Pier, was taken out to big black looking transport, packed on like sardines, had to sleep as best we could on the wet floor. Before leaving we had our last look at Anzac &

wondered why we are being taken away so suddenly.

Dec 13 1915.
At daybreak we found ourselves back at Lemnos once again, am feeling the want of food. Offered one of the crew 2/6 for a drink of tea but was refused. Were taken off transport onto bay steamer Waterwitch then landed on Lemnos. Am now feeling like many more very hungry & sick. Have to march to camp and carry our kits, about noon passed by village, halted for spell. Were able to get oranges and other fruits, chocolate biscuits which helped us considerably to finish our march which was 8 miles & a very hard march it was too. Were issued with bread, biscuits and bully for tea, put up tents after tea & retired for a well-earned sleep.

How this story came about

I've always known, as an occasional memory, that my grandfather kept war diaries. Until this current round of war 'nostalgia' I'd never thought to ask my sister (who got them from our mother) to see them. There are four diaries in all with an entry nearly every day of Leslie Burke's war 1915 to 1919. On some days the writing is so small, though always copperplate neat, it's quite hard to read.

The next theatre of Les's war is in France and it's a tragic story told in a way that highlights both the danger and the mundanity of living rough for so many years of such a young life. It might make a future BWD story.

MY GRANDFATHER AND ME CIRCA 1955.

