

Popes Hill
29.5.15

Dear Mother,

Your cable of 9th sent with batch of letters of 12th Apl followed me right into the trenches at a place called Quinn's Post. We have now been here under fire for almost three weeks. We were shelled while being landed in The Torpedo boat – the landing beach is constantly being shelled & we have been bombed, sniped etc. practically ever since. The first post this Regt. held was "Quinns" when the trenches in some places are only 20 yards from the enemy & funnily enough the section I held was & still is, connected by a communications trench with that of the enemy. The Infantry whom we relieved, bayoneted the Turks out of this trench & joined it with ours – then found it was untenable owing to machine guns enfilading it & had to abandon it, leaving it connected with ours, which rather adds to the interest of the position. One man who declared he was a Greek, surrendered at that point the first day I was on. We lost several men from bombs – cruel & nerve racking things – which are easily thrown by hand into our trenches. The enemy have the best of the deal geographically & numerically – but thanks to the heroic performances of our Infantry before we got here, the moral superiority of our men is established & they embrace every opportunity to get at them ^ the Turks with the bayonet.

The Qland battalions (9th & 15th) have greatly distinguished themselves but their casualty list will stagger Australia. The whole of the valley we hold is drenched with the best of Australia's blood, but the spirit of the men is splendid – especially the Infantry – whose contempt for danger would do credit to the best Regulars. We have had some rain - & as the position we held is a watercourse, the bivouacs in the gullies are even more uncomfortable than the trenches on the ridges under these conditions – so far, the saturated ground has not been responsible for much sickness – this there are great possibilities in this direction. There was a nine hour armistice last Monday to bury dead which were lying between the trenches & stinking us out. It is said 3000 Turks & a good number of ours were buried. Water for drinking is scarce – washing forbidden (this small parties are sometimes allowed to go down to the beach at night as a great treat) & firewood practically non-existent – the ridges round our valley are something like One Tree Hill & covered with dwarf Holly bush & no trees – climate good – outlook over the sea beautiful.

Best love to all
G.H.B.