

The Gallipoli Evacuation

The following extract from a letter from Lieut. A. L. Denny referring to the evacuation of Gallipoli will be found interesting :—

The evacuation was most exciting. A rear-guard of picked men were left in the trenches until the last moment. On the word being passed round, these last men, with muffled feet and muffled bayonets, all sneaked away gradually, and in regular order, until one man had perhaps 20 or 30 firing positions to himself in the front line.

The great bluff was kept going by those men, who walked from position to position, firing their rifles alternately through the loopholes. For an hour of suspense these men were acting this way, when at last the final word came round—"Embarkation of all troops successful; rear guard prepare to retreat."

Now this is where we came in. Our officer, two N.C.O's., another and myself, had charge of covering the whole of the right flank of the Anzacs in their retreat to the boats. Our orders were not to shift our machine gun until the whole of the brigade had embarked. In this way you can imagine we had an anxious moment, or rather moments, when the firing line had been deserted, and there was nothing between us and perhaps 40,000 Turks. If they had dropped to it it goes without saying that none of us last few would have got out of it alive. However it was a great experience, and the Turks were bluffed beautifully. It was very nice for me that I was given one of the places of honour, and everybody in the section was glad to see us at Lemnos again. All the rest of the section except us five went off at about 5 p.m. the last day. Our gun was taken off at 2.35 a.m. next morning, the last of anything to leave Anzac. However this is only a rough sketch of what really happened, and I hope some day to convey in a more graphic manner the thrills we experienced.

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