

THE LANDING

EXTRACT FROM THE WAR DIARY OF 53 SAPPER THOMAS EDWARD DRANE



..... we could just make out the distant hills and we must have been only about a hundred yards off the shore, when the Commander of the Naval Pinance sang out the words "Tell the Colonel these devils have brought us a mile too far North" (what he meant then I did not know, but since I have learnt that it was the strong current that was running that carried us out of our way).

No sooner were the words out of his mouth, then a bright light shone out from the shore and one shot rang over the hills. We knew then that we were seen by the Turks and we were told to pull for our lives to the shore, by the time we had dipped the oars into the water, the bullets were hitting the boats and the water whole-sale, then we were told to get out, and get ashore the best way we could, every man for himself. I can tell you it was cruel to see our lads dropping into the boats, for they had machine guns trained onto us besides their rifle fire.

It was just Hell let lose, nothing short of murder, to see our boys go down like sheep, it made your blood boil, and then that is the time you get mad with excitement, and you are only out to kill or be killed, to avenge the pals who you have loved like brothers. I along with my chums were lucky to reach the shore after a few attempts to wade through water up to the neck. It was the coldest Turkish bath I ever had. There were quite a number of our fellows drowned in trying to get ashore with their packs pulling them down.

After a while we reached the shore, and managed to get under cover, we threw off our packs, for we were wet to the skin. We rested awhile, then crawled along on our stomachs to join the boys, all the time the bullets were singing their death song about our ears, but we did not care for we were at high pitch.

No sooner did we come into view of the enemy, when they opened out with a very deadly fire. One of my pals Cleve Page was hit in the head, killed stone dead, he dropped at my feet; and I vowed vengeance on his slayers.



Cook and me kept on, and joined the rest. Then the order was given to fix bayonets; and drive the Turks out, which we did with a vengeance. I will never forget that charge, for our boys started to coo-ee for all they were worth and gave them the cold steel.