

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT.

FATE OF PRIVATE PERCY RIGBYE STILL NO TRACE.

The following letters touching on the whereabouts of Private Percy Rigbye, of Zeehan, who has been officially reported as missing, will be of interest to his many friends.

Private Sam Smith, an ex-Zeehanite, under date of 8/2/15, writing from Gallipoli to his mother, says—

Received your letter dated July 23. I had begun to think you had not got my cards till you said you had received one. I have written at least once a fortnight, but a certain percentage of letters are delayed for censorship at the base in order to see if they are properly censored before they leave here. Will you tell Mrs Dale that I am writing to her. I heard George was killed, but could not find out when or where. I have given Percy Rigbye up as dead, for when we landed on the 25th we were in the same boat. Morris and myself were the last out, and the bullets were plopping into the water like a handful of stones thrown into a pond. We reached the beach where we lost two men, and I had to wade out to the boat again for two picks and three shovels. When I got back the rest had gone away to the left, except Percy and another, who were carrying ammunition. When we got to the top of the ridge Percy was by himself; the fire got so hot that we had to crawl behind a tank. I sang out to him to come over to us; he left the ammunition and started towards us, but when I looked again he was nowhere to be seen, so I think he must have been shot, for the Turks did not drive us back from our position, and so were unable to take any of our wounded as prisoners. It was the hottest thing I ever hoped to be in, all day the bullets and shrapnel came thick and fast, and we were wondering when our turn would come, and I had just made up my mind that we were safe until the next morning, when I felt something hit my leg. I had a look, but could see nothing, except a tear, so I put my finger in and saw it bleeding. I crawled back to Dr Forster, and he dressed it, but it was not painful, so I went up the hill again, where I met Claude Street with a broken arm. I reached my old place without a mishap, but had not been there long when the leg went dead, and I could hardly move it, but I got back to the beach alright, except for a few nasty falls, one of which gave my right shoulder a twist. Three weeks in hospital satisfied me, for I thought we

would miss the fall of Constantinople if we did not hurry back, but the end is a good way ahead yet, I suppose. The latest war news here seems to point to the Germans running into a trap, and I expect the Russians will give them more than they want.

Captain S. Margetts, of the 11th Battalion, under date of 3/2/16, writing to Mr H. Rigbye, 10 Anderson street, Zeehan, says:—Enquiries have been made regarding your son, No. 481, Private Percy Rigbye. Nothing further in the way of information is forthcoming. He landed with his company on the 25th April at Anzac, and save that he was seen wounded during the day, has not been heard of since. Knowing as I do personally that many a good man although wounded, pushed on again, and it is more likely that he was hit again, later on in the day. Lists of prisoners have come to hand, but his name is not included therein. My own personal opinion is that your son is numbered amongst those brave men who have laid down their lives for right and justice, and have helped to bring the fair name of Australia before the eyes of the whole world. Knowing his character, as a born fighter, and good soldier, you may feel sure that he fell where the fighting was the thickest, hence no knowledge as to the date and place of his death has come to hand. Please accept my deepest sympathy in your great anxiety and suspense.