



Centenary education

Claude's letter – transcribed

Middle/upper primary

GALLIPOLI PENINSULA.

30/6/15.

Dear Tom,

A few lines in answer to your letter of the 10/5/15 which I was very pleased to receive, and to hear that you were all in good health. I suppose you thought I had forgotten you not writing, but Tom a man don't have much time here for writing and no paper or envelopes. We have to wait till we get a letter and then write on the back of it like this one.

I suppose you read all about our landing and fight here and know more about it than me, but by the papers I have seen they don't give our battalion (especially), and also the first brigade, any credit of doing anything at all, don't even publish our casualty lists, and I don't think any battalion done any more than we did. We kept all the machine guns going with water and ammunition and doing all the hard work exposing ourselves to the enemy's machine guns all the time. I can tell you it was hot. I never want to go through it again in fact I cannot find words to express it.

It was hell broke loose, shrapnel coming from all directions, invading us time after time never hardly ceased for five days and nights.

We got relayed on the following Thursday after landing and went down on the beach for a couple of days to reorganise our brigade.

It was marching up off the beach that I stopped the bullet in the hand which put me out of action for a couple of days. It was a regiment of Royal Marines from England that relieved us and I can tell you I don't go much on them. One time here a big mob of them retreated out of the trench when there was no danger whatever, and left a lot of wounded men in it. Poor old Bill Ward and three others of our company jumped into the trench and stopped there for two days on their own, and looked after the wounded.

Tom, a man gets plenty of hard work here, no rest, and hardly any sleep. A man will be able to take on a job at a navy or any labouring work. Tell Uncle Jack to keep me a job labouring for him. I am pretty good with the pick and shovel (mad Mick and the Bango) now and can sleep anyhow at all, standing on one leg at a time, sitting, walking and any old fashion. We are pretty securely entrenched here now and a man is unlucky to get shot through the loop holes. Our old company is nearly all gone now. Poor old Bill is settled for life. He had his left leg amputated six below the knee, he was very unlucky to get hurt the way he did. We all have a dug-out in the side of the trenches and one night he and I just





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came out of the firing into the support trench to have a sleep. We were sitting on the side of our dug-out having a yarn before turning in, when all of a sudden the dug-out fell in on top of him completely covering him over. Willing hands soon got to work with the picks and shovels to get him out. He was still conscious but felt no pain. All his body was numbed and we found out after from the Doctor that he had a double compound fracture of the ankle, and injuries to the spine. I had a letter from him a couple of days from England telling me all about his trouble. It will be a great shock to his Mother and Miss Barnes by jove. Tom, he was a born soldier, as cool as an iceberg under fire and as game as you can make them. So don't forget to tell Miss Barnes if you see her. The old Sergeant is another game one he was hit three times before he would give in. I have heard since that he had lost both his hands.

Leslie is alright and wishes to be remembered to you all. I have a mate here that is a friend of Tom Terry's, a chap named John Spencer from Petersham that works down at the Stores. He used to do sketching or something like that.

Tom tell Mum if anything should happen to me not to forget to make enquiries about that £70 of mine that I handed into the Battalion Fund to mind for me. Tell Annie that I got that letter from her and Eileen and will answer it next if I have time. We don't have much time to ourselves here. All our time is taken up in catching lice on our clothes. If a man takes his shirt off and lays it down it will walk away. We only have the things we stand up in and never get a chance to have a wash. Tom I think this is all this time.

So I will conclude with best love to all at home.

I Remain,
Your fond Brother,
CLAUDE.

AUTHOR: Claude White

LOCATION: Gallipoli

RECIPIENT: Tom White

