

This letter from the then Lieutenant Duncan Chapman, written at Gallipoli to his brother Mr C.F. Chapman, was published in the Maryborough Chronicle in September, 1915.

I can now have the pleasure of dropping you a few lines, as I have managed to "snare" some writing paper from one of our wounded Officers, who has returned.

Yesterday afternoon, while sitting in the front of my dugout in the heat of the afternoon, I was handed a bundle of papers, which were very acceptable. I recognised your old handwriting, and thank you for your thoughtfulness.

Mail and papers are always looked forward to by us in the firing line, and it is surprising how interested one gets in printed matter. So far I have not had a letter from you, although I have written to you a couple of times.

Well, no doubt you have read and reread the various accounts of our landing here and a good many of them have given the facts pretty accurately.

To me was given the extreme honour of being actually the first man to put foot ashore on this peninsula, to lead a portion of the men up the hill in that now historic charge.

What a living hell it was too, and how I managed to go through it from 4 o'clock in the morning of Sunday, the 25th April, to Wednesday, the 28th, under fire the whole time, without being hit, is a mystery to me.

We have firmly established ourselves now, and although the Unspeakable has made various attempts to dislodge us, and threatened to push us into the sea, his efforts have been abortive.

He has come to respect the fighting qualities of the Australian, and is now resorting to defensive measures, which, performed under the guidance of German Officers, are done pretty thoroughly.

I was promoted Captain on 26th April, and put in charge of a full Company of about 263 men. The responsibility is certainly great, especially as the lives of these men are practically given into one's keeping.

It is nine weeks since we landed here, and many poor fellows have tasted the horrors of a campaign. Many noble acts have been performed, and courage is a quality that is not wanting among our fellows.

In the Turk we have a truly obstinate fighter, and he has well earned the title of the "Fighting Turk".

The heat here at the present time is unbearable, and the flies are that numerous that it is doubtful who gets the most when we uncover our tucker, and make an attempt to eat it.

Washing in fresh water is a thing of the past, and our changes of clothing and shaving mornings are few and far between.

The first list that was compiled here, I was put down as missing, also posted in Cairo as having gone astray, but luckily they were wrong, as the fact of being taken by the enemy on the first day held out no hope for the poor unfortunate chaps who had this misfortune.

Young Harvey, from Maryborough, was wounded on the first day and has not returned so far, and his father is away on sick leave. Our Battalion, the 9th, which formed the covering party, lost heavily, especially among the Officers, who were spotted mostly by the snipers.

The close shaves I had were remarkable and if I am spared to get back I have a few curios of interest to show.

Well, old man, the mail is closing shortly, and I have to censor a couple of hundred letters, so will have to close.