

## CHAPTER XVII

### DETAILED PLANS FOR THE SUVLA LANDING

(Map 3; Sketches A, 21)

THE main object of the Suvla landing, and some of the detailed **Map 3.** plans, have been described in earlier chapters; but it will **Sketch** probably facilitate the study of subsequent events if, at the **A.** expense of a little repetition, the whole plan for the disembarkation and subsequent action of the troops is now set down in full.

In general terms Sir Ian Hamilton's purpose was, first, to throw a covering force ashore on the night of 7th/8th August with such speed and in such strength as to enable General Stopford to surprise and overwhelm the Turkish garrison before dawn and seize the heights encircling Suvla Bay. After daybreak the covering troops were to be strongly reinforced in order to enable Stopford to assist the Anzac corps, if such help were needed, in its fight for Hill 971, and to ensure the landing of the rest of his command with the minimum possible delay.

To attain these objects Sir Ian Hamilton aimed at landing the three infantry brigades of the 11th Division as nearly simultaneously as possible, beginning about 10 P.M., and at completing the disembarkation of 13,700 men and 12 guns<sup>1</sup> at least an hour before dawn. At daylight these troops were to be followed by 7,000 more infantry, and thereafter, in gradual succession, by 44 more guns<sup>2</sup> and a continuous flow of horses, mules, ammunition, vehicles and stores.

<sup>1</sup> The Highland Mountain Brigade (eight 10-pdrs.) and A Battery (four 18-pdrs.) of the LIX Brigade R.F.A.

<sup>2</sup> Of these, the three remaining batteries (twelve 18-pdrs.) of the LIX Bde. R.F.A. would be landed from the *Minneapolis* at Suvla, followed later in the day by the 15th Heavy Battery R.G.A. (four 60-pdrs.). The sixteen 18-pdrs. of the LVIII Bde. R.F.A. were already ashore at Anzac, and would be available as soon as their teams could be landed at Suvla and sent to fetch them. The 10th Heavy Battery R.G.A. (four 60-pdrs.) was also to come over from Anzac, and Birdwood was to release the 1/4th Lowland Brigade (eight 5-inch howitzers) by nightfall of the 7th.

Eleven bullet-proof motor-lighters, under the orders of Commander E. Unwin, V.C., of *River Clyde* fame, were available for the operation, and it was hoped with their assistance to throw the first ten thousand men ashore in little more than an hour.

For the night landing three beaches were to be used, B and C to the south of Nibrunesi Point, and A Beach inside the bay.<sup>1</sup> One infantry brigade only was to be landed at A and the rest of the troops at B and C.

Next morning, as soon as it was light, Suvla Bay would be reconnoitred, and its best available beach selected for the main landing place. The bay would meanwhile have been protected by an anti-submarine net, and big transports would arrive at daybreak and anchor inside. All subsequent disembarkations would then take place on barrel and trestle piers to be erected at the main landing place, and B and C Beaches would be given up. The success of this scheme, however, would obviously depend on the enemy being driven back and the bay secured before daylight.

The night landing was to be carried out in three echelons. The first echelon—10,300 men—consisted of the three infantry brigades, divisional headquarters, two field companies, signal and medical units and some specially trained beach parties of the Anson Battalion.<sup>2</sup> These troops would be embarked in ten motor-lighters and ten destroyers, each destroyer carrying 500-530 men and each lighter 500 men. Three destroyers and three motor-lighters with the 34th Brigade unit<sup>3</sup> would head for A Beach, and seven destroyers and seven motor-lighters, with the 32nd and 33rd brigade units, divisional headquarters and two field companies, would go to B. Battalions were to embark 750 strong, the balance of officers and men being left at Imbros as a first reinforcement.

The ten destroyers in this first echelon, moving with all lights darkened, were each to tow one lighter and one picket boat from Imbros to Suvla, but were not to approach the shore till 9.45 P.M., fifteen minutes after the opening of the New

<sup>1</sup> See f.n. 2, page 151. B and C Beaches were practically adjoining. The northern half (C Beach) was to be reserved for disembarking horses, guns and vehicles, as the shore was more steep to there. All the dismounted troops were to land on the southern half (B Beach).

<sup>2</sup> The Anson Battalion, brought up to 1,000 strong, and divided into two units of 500 men each, had been temporarily withdrawn from the R.N. Division, specially trained in beach duties and in loading pack animals, and attached to the IX Corps. It was hoped by this means to expedite the despatch of stores, water and ammunition to troops in the front line.

<sup>3</sup> Each brigade unit consisted of brigade headquarters, four battalions, a signal section and a detachment of the Anson Battalion.

Zealanders' attack at Anzac. They were then to proceed in line abreast to their respective beaches, guided by a light shown to seaward by the destroyer which always lay off the Anzac left flank.

Having arrived as close as possible to the shore,<sup>1</sup> destroyers were to slip their motor-lighters and picket-boats, and ease down their anchors.<sup>2</sup> The motor-lighters, using their own power, were then to run ashore, discharge their troops, haul off, return to their own destroyers, and land the destroyers' troops in the same way. If all went well it was hoped that the three brigades would be ashore within an hour of the destroyers coming to anchor. But, in view of the numerous chances of delay, treble that time was allowed in the tactical calculations for subsequent action. The picket-boats, each of them in charge of a midshipman, and five of them carrying machine guns in their bows, were not to be used for landing troops, but were to assist the lighters if required, and subsequently to tow ashore the horse-boats, which would arrive in the second and third echelons with horses and guns.

The navy's greatest anxiety was the fear of rocks or sand-banks in Suvla Bay. To guard against delays from this cause, supplementary tows of boats, towed by two drifters, were to proceed in company to the entrance of the bay, to be ready, in case of need, to land the 34th Brigade.

No animals or vehicles could be landed in this first echelon. The troops were to man-handle their machine guns, entrenching tools and other necessary gear in the first stage of their advance. Packs and greatcoats would be left behind at Imbros, but the infantry was to carry 200 rounds per man and 3,500 rounds per machine gun,<sup>3</sup> and all ranks were to land with two iron rations in their haversacks.

The second echelon, due to arrive off B and C Beaches an hour after the first echelon had begun to land, consisted of over 3,000 more troops, including the divisional signal company and pioneer battalion, the third field company, two mountain batteries (eight 10-pdr. guns) and one field battery (four 18-pdr. guns) and 212 horses. This echelon would be carried in the

<sup>1</sup> At B and C it was known that destroyers could go quite close to the beach. Inside the bay the destroyers for A Beach would probably have to anchor 600 yards from the shore.

<sup>2</sup> The utmost precautions were enjoined by the navy to do this as noiselessly as possible. In some ships coal bags made of tarred hemp were lashed round the drum of the capstan, and on the shackles of the cable, and the hawse pipe was thickly padded with the same material.

<sup>3</sup> Each of the ten motor-lighters was in addition to take across 40 boxes of small arm ammunition, to be landed as opportunity offered and form a corps reserve of four million rounds.

cruisers *Theseus* and *Enclymion* temporarily borrowed from the supporting squadrons to embark 1,000 men each, the sloop *Aster* towing the eleventh motor-lighter, and three trawlers, each towing four horse-boats. The naval base signal station personnel would accompany this echelon and open their station at Nibrunesi Point.

The third echelon would bring more gun-horses, gun-wagons, signal-wagons and water-carts. Some difficulty was experienced in arranging for this echelon, as the navy was at the end of its resources for small craft. Twelve more horse-boats, however, were eventually secured for it, and it was arranged that as soon as the three trawlers in the second echelon had slipped their tows at C Beach they were to return for these additional horse-boats, which would be waiting, loaded up, in Imbros harbour.<sup>1</sup> Allowing for the trawlers' double journey, it was hoped that the third echelon would complete its disembarkation about 3 A.M.

Naval beach-parties, specially selected from the battleships' crews at Mudros, were to proceed independently from Imbros in three trawlers, and to land at their respective beaches as soon as the first echelon of troops had got ashore. Captain H. F. G. Talbot, R.N., Principal Beach Master, was to land at A Beach, as also the Principal Military Landing Officer, Colonel W. G. B. Western.<sup>2</sup>

Rear-Admiral Christian, in naval charge of the landing, was responsible for the selection of the main landing-place in Suvla Bay, and for the unloading of transports and the conveyance of their contents ashore.<sup>3</sup> The order in which everything was to be landed had been provisionally decided upon beforehand, and a detailed programme issued to all concerned. If necessary, however, this programme was to be varied, so far as naval exigencies would permit, to meet tactical requirements, and in this respect the admiral was to endeavour to meet the wishes of the corps commander.

The responsibility for receiving everything on shore was shared by the Principal Beach Master and the Principal Military Landing Officer. These officers had been working together in similar capacities at Helles, and were conver-

<sup>1</sup> The name of the harbour at Imbros was Kephalo; it was sometimes called "K Beach".

<sup>2</sup> Col. Western was to be under the orders of G.O.C. IX Corps until the Turks had been pushed back far enough to allow the beaches to be handed over to the Inspector General of Communications. Some of the assistant military landing officers were drawn from the 2nd Mounted Division, then in Egypt.

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix 9 (Epitome of Naval Orders).



sant with the type of problems with which they would be faced. The P.B.M. and his assistants (naval personnel) would be responsible for the actual berthing and expeditious unloading of the small craft as they came ashore, and for choosing the sites for landing-stages and piers. The P.M.L.O. and his assistants (military personnel) would be responsible for forwarding men and animals to the forming-up places; improving exits from the beach; forming dumps of ammunition, supplies and stores; detailing working parties; arranging with the medical authorities for the evacuation of wounded; constructing piers and landing-stages at the points required by the navy; storing sea-borne water and developing the local water-supply. As regards piers and water-supply, the work would be supervised by the Chief Engineer of the corps (Br.-General A. C. Painter, R.E.), who was in charge of general engineer duties.

As soon as all the troops for the night landing were ashore, the motor-lighters were to be collected by Commander Unwin and taken inside Suvla Bay in readiness to disembark six battalions of the 10th Division due to arrive from Mitylene at daybreak. The 24 horse-boats from C Beach were similarly to be collected and taken inside the bay by the sloop *Aster* in readiness to discharge horses, mules, guns, vehicles and stores from the large transports which would arrive at Suvla and anchor inside the bay as soon as the anti-submarine net had been laid across the entrance. The two cruisers were to proceed to their allotted stations for supporting the troops with fire as soon as daylight came; and the trawlers, the supplementary tows, and tows of specially fitted hospital launches were to be got ready to assist in the evacuation of wounded.

The remaining three battalions of the 10th Division from Mudros, together with 10th Division headquarters, were to reach Imbros in four small steamers at daybreak, and would proceed to Suvla for disembarkation as soon as the six battalions from Mitylene had disembarked.

Eight large transports were to reach Suvla at daybreak: two with supplies and forage for the 10th and 11th Divisions, three<sup>1</sup> (to be followed by two more) carrying mules and vehicles, and three carrying the LIX Brigade R.F.A. (less one battery)<sup>2</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Of these, the *Dundrennan* and *Ramazan*, which were to be unloaded first, each carried 300 mules and 150 2 wheel carts, half for Suvla and half for Anzac. They were all to be landed at Suvla, as owing to the danger from enemy submarines it was unsafe for large vessels to discharge off Anzac.

<sup>2</sup> A Battery LIX Brigade had been taken off the *Minneapolis* to land with the 11th Division infantry, and its place was taken by infantry mules,

large numbers of horses. In addition, two trawlers were to arrive from Mudros with reserve ammunition. The total weight that had to be landed as quickly as possible amounted to 250 tons of supplies and 330 tons of ammunition, in addition to 1,400 horses, 1,500 mules<sup>1</sup> and nearly 500 wagons and carts.

Piers and jetties were to be constructed at the site selected for the main landing-place, and the 1st Australian Bridging Train,<sup>2</sup> which, since its arrival in July, had been building piers in Mudros harbour, was to land at Suvla at daybreak on the 7th to assist a specially detailed field company R.E. of the 11th Division in this important work. pontoons, and the material for making a barrel pier 300 feet long, had been collected at Imbros and would be towed to Suvla as soon as the landing was made good.

A Royal Engineers store-ship, the *Prah*, loaded with beach and trench stores, was to be anchored at Imbros. The IX Corps was to take from her, before the 6th August, such stores as would be required on landing. The P.M.L.O. was given a list of the remaining contents of this vessel, which included waterproof tanks and lift and force pumps, and was instructed to telegraph to G.H.Q. for any further stores required.<sup>3</sup>

Although it was anticipated that plenty of water would eventually be found in the Suvla zone, elaborate precautions had been taken to avoid a shortage in the early stages of the attack. Four 50-ton water-lighters, specially fitted out in Egypt for the occasion, were to be towed across from Mudros to Suvla at daybreak by the water-tank steamer *Krini*. This vessel herself carried 200 tons of water, and could refill the lighters when empty. Each lighter was fitted with troughs, pumps and 150 feet of hose, and was manned by a small crew of Royal Engineers. To enable the IX Corps to get this water forward to the troops the bazaars in Egypt had again been ransacked for every imaginable kind of water-carrying receptacle, and large quantities of milk-cans, petrol-tins, cermel-tanks, water-bags and *pakhals* (most of them ready-filled with water) had been shipped in the mule-ships *Dundrennan* and *Ramazan*. The IX Corps and the Principal Military Landing Officer had both

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water-carts and ambulance wagons. The presence of these animals and vehicles on the same ship as the artillery was unfortunate; it was eventually decided to land them first, and this delayed the landing of the guns.

<sup>1</sup> Of these, 400 horses and 900 mules were to be sent round to Anzac.

<sup>2</sup> This unit, composed mostly of Australian naval reservists, had left Australia at the end of May, with pontoons, trestles and technical equipment. Its work at Suvla was of the utmost value to the IX Corps.

<sup>3</sup> Owing to the great importance of her cargo the utmost care had to be taken not to expose the *Prah* to the risk of being torpedoed.

been advised of all these arrangements, and the P.M.L.O. had been specially warned that these two ships must be discharged at the earliest possible moment, "as they carry all the water-receptacles, which will be urgently required on landing, and " must be landed simultaneously with the mules". To prevent men being short of water during the first night, large numbers of water-tins had been placed in all the motor-lighters, so that all ranks could refill their bottles before going ashore.

The number of mules and mule-carts to be landed had been worked out with strict regard to the numbers required to carry rations, water and ammunition to the troops ashore, making one or two trips a day, according to the estimated distance that the various units were expected to advance during the early stages of the operations. All ranks were to be warned that it might be impossible to issue more than half-rations on the third and fourth days.

Throughout the days of preparation General Stopford and his staff had found their chief anxiety in the small amount of artillery support that could be made available for his troops on the morning after the landing. Sir Ian Hamilton had tried to increase the original figures, but this could not be done. Before the days of tanks and mechanized artillery it was inevitable that the normal rôles of artillery and infantry should be reversed in the case of an opposed landing. Instead of the guns opening the way for the infantry, the infantry had to push forward to seize a position to cover the landing of the guns. In the accomplishment of this task they could count on some support from the navy,<sup>1</sup> but apart from its moral effect the value of ships' guns against narrow trenches was almost negligible. It followed that in 1915 a landing on an open beach demanded for its success either that the beach should be undefended, or that its garrison should be surprised and overrun by sheer weight of numbers. It was believed by G.H.Q. that one of these conditions would obtain. But General Stopford was doubtful.

According to the plans drawn up at G.H.Q. a total of 56 guns and howitzers would be available at Suvla by the night of the 7th. But thenceforward there would be some delay in landing the remainder of the IX Corps artillery, most of which,

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 6. A conference attended by the B.C.R.A. IX Corps (Br.-General S. C. U. Smith) had been held in the flagship on the 2nd August and a workable scheme evolved for controlling the naval fire. The B.C.R.A. was to be on board the *Taibot*, and fire was to be controlled by wireless telegraphy to Nibrunes Point, and thence by telephone to the forward observation officers.

owing to lack of accommodation on the islands, had been temporarily detained in Egypt. This consisted of one more 18-pdr. brigade (the LX) belonging to the 11th Division, three 18-pdr. brigades and two 4.5-inch batteries<sup>1</sup> of the 10th Division, and two 18-pdr. brigades of the 13th Division. Some of these guns were to start embarking in Egypt on the 6th, and, if necessary, could be put ashore at Suvla (without horses) on the 9th. But General Stopford had been warned that owing to the urgent necessity of landing animals, vehicles and stores for the troops to be landed on the 6th and 7th, and for the 53rd Division (which would probably follow in quick succession), it would be inadvisable to land any more guns till the 13th or 14th of the month.

Attention has already been called to the reasons which underlay the decision to land at least a brigade inside Suvla Bay. G.H.Q. believed that the Chocolate Hills were entrenched on their southern and western slopes, but undefended on their northern side. They also considered it unsafe to trust to the Salt Lake being passable by infantry, and had counselled an advance against the hills by way of the western and northern shores of the lake. A landing inside the bay was subsequently considered a safer alternative than a long march round the lake, despite the navy's fears of hidden rocks.

In point of fact new information which had accumulated by the morning of the 6th tended to show that a landing south of Nibrunesi Point and a direct advance, south of the lake, against Chocolate Hill would have been the best course to pursue. An aeroplane photograph received on the 4th showed that on the small mound marked Hill 10, half a mile inland from A Beach, the Turks had now constructed a small circular redoubt.<sup>2</sup> Finally, early on the 6th, a new aeroplane photograph showed that the Turks had now dug trenches on the northern as well as the southern side of the Chocolate Hills and had also completed a small trench near Baka Baba. This information was forwarded to IX Corps and 11th Division headquarters as soon as received,<sup>3</sup> but it was then too late to alter the plans for the landing, and no such idea was even thought of.

Sketch  
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<sup>1</sup> The LIV, EV, and LVI Brigades R.F.A., and two batteries of the LVII (Howitzer) Brigade. The other two batteries of this brigade, as also the whole of the LXI (Howitzer) Brigade belonging to the 11th Division, had been left behind in England for lack of ammunition.

<sup>2</sup> An air report received the same day stated that the Salt Lake was certainly dry, except for three pools, and that troops advancing north along the spit could avoid the Cut, whose sides seemed to be sheer and about 15 feet deep, by marching along the edge of the lake.

<sup>3</sup> The defences of the Chocolate Hills were plotted on to a map which reached 11th Division H.Q. at 1.30 P.M. on the 6th.



General Hammersley's orders for the 11th Division<sup>1</sup> were issued at 8 P.M. on the 5th August. He described the tasks allotted to him as, first, to secure the landings at A, B and C Beaches, and, secondly, to secure Suvla Bay for the disembarkation of the 10th Division and stores.

The 34th Brigade (Br.-General W. H. Sitwell), to land at A Beach, was entrusted with the most important and most difficult rôle. Of the two battalions in the lighters—the first troops to land—one (9/Lancashire Fusiliers) was to seize the redoubt on Hill 10, the other (11/Manchester Regiment) was to turn left-handed along the beach, clear the northern headland, including the enemy post on Ghazi Baba, and then advance along the Kiretch Tepe ridge as far, "if possible", as Point 156. The two battalions from the destroyers<sup>2</sup> were to join the leading battalion on Hill 10, and all three battalions were then to move forward to attack the Chocolate Hills from the north. This advance, if all went well, was to be supported by the 32nd Brigade, but was in no case to begin later than 1.30 A.M. on the 7th August.

The 6/Yorkshire and the 9/West Yorkshire of the 32nd Brigade (Br.-General H. Haggard), landing at the northern end of B Beach, were to seize Lala Baba, and then to press straight on *via* the Cut to Hill 10, followed by the other two battalions of the brigade (8/West Riding and 6/York & Lancaster) and brigade headquarters, as soon as they had disembarked. On reaching Hill 10, the whole of Br.-General Haggard's brigade would come under Br.-General Sitwell's orders to support the attack on the Chocolate Hills.

The 7/South Staffordshire and the 9/Sherwood Foresters of the 33rd Brigade (Br.-General R. P. Maxwell), landing at the southern end of B Beach, were to protect the right flank of the landing-place by digging a line from that point to the south-east corner of the Salt Lake. Brigade headquarters and the 6/Lincolnshire and the 6/Border Regiment, as also the divisional pioneer battalion (6/East Yorkshire), as soon as they had landed, were to follow the 32nd Brigade to a point about 500 yards east of Hill 10 where they would remain in divisional reserve.

Of the three field companies, one was to proceed direct to A Beach for special duty; the other two were to join the 33rd Brigade in divisional reserve.

The twelve guns, as soon as ready, were to move to Lala Baba, and divisional headquarters would be established on the western slopes of that hill.

<sup>1</sup> Appendix 5.

<sup>2</sup> The 8/Northumberland Fusiliers and 5/Dorsetshire Regiment.

In order to distinguish friend from foe in the dark, all troops of the 11th Division were to wear a white arm-band on each arm and a white patch on the haversack.

It was not until the forenoon of the 6th August that units of the 11th Division were told of their immediate departure for the peninsula. In some cases the men had been inoculated against cholera only the day before. Brigade orders were issued shortly after midday, but though maps of the Suvla area were then handed out, there was little chance to study them. Soon after 3 P.M. the troops fell in on their battalion parade grounds, and an hour later, to the accompaniment of the distant thunder of the opening bombardment at Helles and Anzac, the division began to embark. In a few instances battalion orders had been hurriedly issued before leaving camp, but in most cases it was not till after their arrival on board the crowded lighters that subordinate leaders were given any inkling of the task that lay in front of them.

At a quarter past seven the sun went down in a crimson blaze, and half an hour later the whole flotilla crept quietly out of the bay. This departure was marked by none of the gay enthusiasm of the original Expeditionary Force as it started out from Mudros on the 23rd April, bound for the "Great Adventure" Three bitter months had passed since that day. The well-debated experiences of the Helles landings had left no room for illusions. Stripped of its veil of romance, the gaunt figure of war stood out in its grim reality. Yet the more serious demeanour of the New Army troops as they slowly filed on board left a good impression on all who watched them embark. Grave but determined, they bore the air of men whom their leaders could trust.

For the course of the landing Admiral de Robeck was flying his flag in the cruiser *Chatnam*, and Rear-Admiral A. H. Christian was flying his in the sloop *Jonquil*. Communication between Suvla and G.H.Q. could be carried out through these vessels by wireless; but in order to ensure a direct military route for messages the cable ship attached to the fleet was to lay a cable from Imbros to Suvla, and the Suvla end of it would be landed at Nibrunesi Point as soon as the first troops were ashore.

During the landings at Helles on the 25th April experience had proved that it was practically impossible for the general officer commanding to keep in touch with his units or exercise any useful influence over the battle from the deck of a man-of-war. Profiting by this experience Sir Ian Hamilton had intended that General Stopford and his staff should remain at

Imbros during the night of the 6th/7th August and land at Suvla at dawn. General Stopford, however, was anxious to be close to his troops from the outset, and it was eventually arranged that he should embark overnight in the *Jonquil* with Rear-Admiral Christian. Owing to the smallness of that vessel there would not be room on board for many military officers. But Stopford would be accompanied by his General Staff; and as his administrative Staff would be accommodated in the *Minneapolis*, due to reach Suvla at daybreak, the whole of corps headquarters could be reunited on shore at an early hour in the morning.

On a later page it will be seen that this arrangement miscarried. Being anxious to keep in touch with Admiral Christian, and believing that, until his corps signal company's lines were laid, it would be easier to communicate with the troops on both sides of the bay from the deck of the *Jonquil* anchored inside the bay than from any available position on shore, General Stopford unexpectedly decided not to land on the 7th August. He remained on board the *Jonquil* till the evening of the 8th; and as no special arrangements had been made for signalling large numbers of military messages from that small vessel, or even for an adequate supply of boats to convey officers or messages to and from the shore, this decision hampered, during a very critical period, the proper exercise of command. As on the 25th April,<sup>1</sup> moreover, it resulted in the regrettable separation of the General and administrative branches of the Staff at a moment when close co-operation was an essential factor of success. Owing to the confusion in Suvla Bay on the morning of the 7th it was nearly midday before General Stopford's principal administrative staff officer (Br.-General J. H. Poett) could procure a boat to take him ashore from the *Minneapolis*. He then discovered that grave delay was occurring in the disembarkation of mules; but it was not until evening that he could get hold of another boat to take him out to the *Jonquil* to report this serious matter.

By the evening of the 6th August Sir Frederick Stopford's anxieties had been deepened by a closer study of the tasks that faced his corps,<sup>2</sup> and by a stroke of ill-luck he had sprained his knee that morning. A staff officer from G.H.Q., visiting IX

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I. pp. 253-4.

<sup>2</sup> General Mahon, to whom he unfolded his plan the day before, had apparently increased his pessimism. In 1917 General Mahon, giving evidence before the Dardanelles Commission, recounted that as soon as he heard the plan he told Stopford that it was far too intricate and complicated to have a reasonable chance of success.



Corps headquarters that evening for a final word with the staff, was told that the corps commander wished to see him. General Stopford was lying down on his valise, spread out on the floor of his tent. "I want you", he said, "to tell Sir Ian Hamilton that I am going to do my best, and that I hope to be successful. But he must realize that if the enemy proves to be holding a strong line of continuous entrenchments I shall be unable to dislodge him till more guns are landed." "All the teaching of the campaign in France", he added, falling into the exact phraseology used by his Chief of Staff eleven days earlier, "proves that continuous trenches cannot be attacked without the assistance of large numbers of howitzers."

The staff officers replied that G.H.Q. were confident that no continuous system of trenches existed at Suvla. All that was necessary was for the 11th Division to push inland with all possible speed, and seize the high ground overlooking the bay before the Turks had time to bring up reinforcements.

General Stopford's forebodings served to accentuate the anxiety with which for the next eight hours the news of his landing was awaited at G.H.Q. Nevertheless, there can be little doubt that amongst the officers at Sir Ian Hamilton's headquarters on the night of the 6th August there was still a feeling of confidence that, both at Anzac and Suvla, their highest hopes would be realized and that victory was at last in sight.

Sir Ian Hamilton's temperament was habitually and admittedly optimistic. "If you would prefer a pessimistic tone given to my appreciations," he wrote about this time to a member of the Government, "then I am afraid you will have to get another General." But the Commander-in-Chief's hopefulness was this time shared by officers who had hitherto been sceptical of success. To some extent, no doubt, it was a reflection of the prevailing opinion in General Birdwood's camp, where the Anzac scheme had originated, where all its intricate details had been worked out, and where confidence in the success of the scheme had never yet wavered. If the Anzac corps had a reasonable chance of success by making an isolated attack from within the Anzac position with the help of only five additional brigades, these chances would surely be increased out of all recognition by a surprise landing of an extra 20,000 men on the enemy's flank at Suvla.

