

CHAPTER III

MAY AT HELLES

At the end of the Second Battle of Krithia (6th-8th May) the Allied line in the Helles zone extended from the Ægean coast a few hundred yards short of Y Beach, to a point on the Dardanelles south-west of the mouth of Kereves Dere. Measured in a straight line the total length of front was about $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles, of which roughly two-thirds were held by the British, and the remainder by the French. The trench lines were not yet continuous, and though in places they were within a few hundred yards of Turkish advanced posts, for the most part a gap of nearly half a mile separated the opposing forces.

The British force at Helles at this time consisted of the 29th Division,¹ two brigades² of the 42nd Division, five battalions of the Royal Naval Division,³ and the 29th Indian Infantry Brigade. The French force consisted of two Colonial divisions.

The average distance of the Allied trenches from the main landing places at W and V, with their base establishments, hospitals and depots, was little more than three miles. Almost the whole area in British occupation was overlooked by the enemy's positions on the forward slopes of Achi Baba, and was within effective range of his guns. With the bulk of the Expeditionary Force crowded into this small space, it can be understood why, at the various headquarters in the south, anxiety for the capture of Achi Baba amounted almost to an obsession.

There was no British corps staff at Helles at this period, and all the British formations were officially under the orders of G.H.Q. Actually, however, for tactical purposes, they had been placed under Major-General Hunter-Weston, the commander of the 29th Division. Hunter-Weston, therefore, was already invested with far more authority than normally falls to

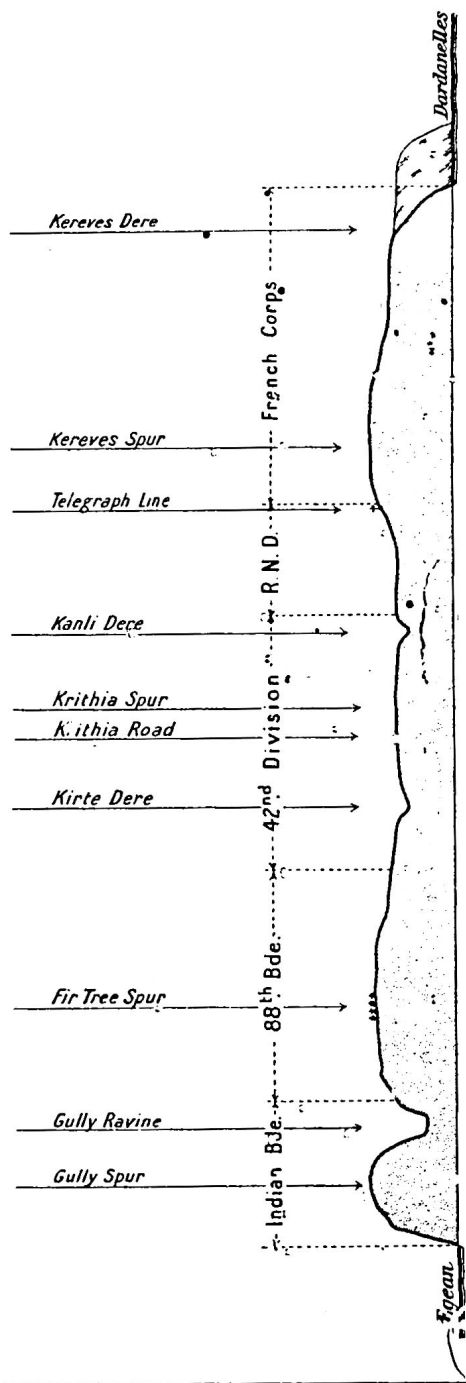
¹ Now consisting of the 87th and 88th Brigades. See f.n. 1, page 32.

² 125th (Lancs. Fus.) Brigade and 127th (Manchester) Brigade.

³ Plymouth Bn. R.M.L.I., and Hod, Howe, Anson and Drake Bns.

Sketch 2.

SECTION OF THE GALLIPODI PENINSULA ON THE LINE ATTACKED BY THE ALLIED TROOPS ON THE 4TH JUNE 1915.



SCALE (APPROX.)
 0 1000 2000 Yards
 Heights exaggerated 5 times

Prepared in the Historical Section (Military Branch)

the lot of a divisional commander, and his opinion carried special weight at G.H.Q.

Though the Second Battle of Krithia had ended in very heavy losses for no appreciable gain, General Hunter-Weston stoutly refused to admit that he was in any way discouraged by the result of that battle. While Sir Ian Hamilton, in the first flood of disappointment, was telegraphing to Lord Kitchener that "our troops have done all that flesh and blood can do against semi-permanent works, and they are not able to carry them", General Hunter-Weston appeared to be confident of the success of an early renewal of the attack, and his buoyant spirits, fiery energy and quite unconquerable optimism were largely responsible for kindling the hope at G.H.Q.—and for reviving it again in June and once again in July—that the Achi Baba position could still be captured.

On the 9th May indeed, General Hunter-Weston was already preparing an order to his tired division, that brigades must maintain "a ceaseless initiative" by means of local advances. Continuous work was to be carried out on the improvement of communications; an accurate map was to be made of the enemy's trenches; and brigadiers were to forward their proposals for the capture of the hostile line immediately in front of them. At the end of this order, which was issued on the 10th, the divisional commander expressed his conviction that if the next attack were systematically prepared, and the offensive never relinquished for a moment, the capture of the enemy's position would be an easier matter than any of the actions in which the division had hitherto fought.

Twenty-four hours later, on the 11th May, an order was issued by G.H.Q. laying down the general lines upon which the capture of Achi Baba was to be undertaken. After stating that the arduous work of the past fortnight necessitated a brief pause to recuperate and refit, it said that further progress must be made by continuous attacks on narrow fronts rather than by a general action involving the advance of the whole line. The distance between the opposing trenches was to be reduced by sapping forward, or by night advances; close reconnaissances were to be carried out to enable a good trench map to be completed, and an adequate system of communications was to be elaborated both laterally and from front to rear. The order ended: "If another offensive in the immediate future is prepared on these lines Sir Ian Hamilton feels sure that the capture of the Achi Baba position will be certainly and speedily achieved."

In point of fact there was so little justification for this

opinion on the 11th May that it is more than probable that neither Sir Ian Hamilton nor his subordinate commander at Helles was half as sanguine of an early success as these bold words implied. But at moments of crisis in war the situation may often demand a show of confidence from a leader which he is actually far from feeling, and in Gallipoli in May 1915 the question of keeping up the army's morale was a matter of vital importance. The troops themselves were wonderful. Helped by a perfect climate and an excellent commissariat, and invigorated by the frequent opportunities for sea-bathing, they were showing an extraordinary power of endurance. All three divisions, indeed, were displaying the traditional qualities of British infantry at its best. Contemporary records abound with instances of their unflinching good spirits, and their unconquerable belief that "all would come right in the end". None the less, it was difficult for even the least imaginative amongst them to be unconscious that things were going wrong. Achi Baba, which was to have been taken on the 25th April, was as far away as ever. Units were dwindling to less than half their normal size. No reinforcements seemed to be arriving; and though every corner of the occupied area could be reached by Turkish shell-fire, the British ammunition supply had sunk so low that the British guns could rarely open fire. In these circumstances it was imperative to counteract the forebodings of disaster already being circulated by the less steadfast of the non-combatants on the peninsula. It was a time when malcontents could be a grave danger to the cause of the Allies, and the Commander-in-Chief was eventually obliged to send the chief offender home.

So far as the 29th Division was concerned there could for the moment be no thought of employing any part of it in even a minor attack, for every officer and man was in imperative need of rest. Fortunately, the third brigade² of the 42nd Division had now reached the peninsula, and on 11th May it was at last possible to send the 29th Division into reserve. The division had been at grips with the enemy for seventeen days and nights without relief. Its hard-won landing on the 25th April had been followed by the First Battle of Krithia on the 28th, the Turkish night attacks of the 2nd and 3rd May, and the three days' continuous fighting of the Second Battle of Krithia. Its total casualties had amounted to more than half its officers and half its rank and file. "During the whole of that period", wrote

¹ So serious was the state of the ammunition supply that on the 20th May G.H.Q. was compelled to limit the normal daily expenditure to two rounds per gun per day.

² 126th (East Lancs.) Brigade.

Sir Ian Hamilton in a special order, "they have been illuminating the pages of military history with their blood. . . . I tender "to Major-General Hunter-Weston and to his division at the "same time my profoundest sympathy with their losses, and "my warmest congratulations on their achievement"

On the 12th May the British line at Helles was held by the Indian brigade (Major-General H. V. Cox) on the left and the 42nd Division on the right. The main Turkish positions in front had not been definitely located, but on the extreme left, on Gully Spur, the Indian trenches were overlooked by a Turkish post somewhere in the southern bank of the steep nullah (known later as Gurkha Ravine), which falls into the sea at Y Beach. Fire from this post had frustrated every effort to make progress along Gully Spur on the last two days of the Second Battle of Krithia; but, after reading General Hunter-Weston's order on the subject of local advances, General Cox had suggested that a small party of his troops could capture the post by an outflanking movement at night along the shore. This proposal being approved, the operation was entrusted to the 1/6th Gurkhas (Lieut.-Colonel Hon. C. G. Bruce), and was fixed for the 12th May.

At nightfall on that date, covered by a fire-demonstration on the eastern side of Gully Ravine, a double-company of Gurkhas crept along the shore to the foot of the bluff (afterwards called Gurkha Bluff), at the northern end of Y Beach. Here they scaled the cliff, and dug themselves in without opposition. At the same time the southern bank of Y Beach nullah was bombarded by two warships¹ lying off the left flank. At four o'clock in the morning another double-company of Gurkhas crept along the beach to extend the captured position to the right. The Turks in the nullah, finding themselves outflanked, retired; and an hour later the remainder of the Gurkhas, supported by a double-company of the Sikhs on the opposite side of Gully Ravine, moved forward over the open and occupied the new line. Colonel Bruce's successful flanking movement had gained at least five hundred yards at a point where progress had hitherto been thought impossible.

After the return of four battalions² of the Royal Naval Division from Anzac on the 14th May the nine original battalions of that division found themselves together for the first time since they left England. The French corps had by this time lost so heavily that General d'Amade had asked for a

¹ *Talbot* (cruiser) and *Wolverine* (destroyer).

² Chatham, Portsmouth, and Deal Bns., R.M.I., and the Nelson Bn.

reduction in the length of his front line, and on the 13th May it was decided that as soon as the 29th Division had had a short rest, the whole front should be reorganized in depth in four sections, the French corps holding the extreme right (or No. 1) section, and the Royal Naval Division, the 42nd Division, and the 29th Division,¹ being responsible for the other three.

From the point of view of a fresh advance the general siting of the British line still left much to be desired. On the extreme left the opposing trenches were only about 300 yards apart, but in the centre there was still a distance of nearly half a mile between the British front line and the nearest Turkish trench. It was essential to reduce this distance before a fresh attack could be launched on the Turkish positions, and, as soon as the 29th Division returned to the line, energetic measures were taken to gain more ground.

Up to this time nothing had been decided as to the date for the next attack or the form it should take. But reinforcing drafts of respectable proportions were now on their way from England,² and General Hunter-Weston had changed his mind about the necessity of confining future attacks to one section of the enemy's line at a time. He was now fairly confident that with the arrival of the new drafts a successful attack could be

¹ The 86th Brigade had not yet been reconstituted and the 29th Division consisted of the 87th, 88th, and 29th Indian Brigades. Of the Indian brigade the 69th and 89th Punjabis had been sent back to Egypt on 14th May, as owing to the number of Mahomedans in their ranks the brigade commander did not advise their employment against the Turks. They were replaced in the first week of June by the 1/5th and 2/10th Gurkhas; but pending the arrival of these units the 1/Lancashire Fusiliers and 1/Royal Munster Fusiliers (both of the 86th Brigade, 29th Division) were attached to the Indian brigade and fought with it in the battle of 4th June.

² 2,700 men for the 29th Division were due at the end of May, and another 2,500 at the beginning of June. A draft of 500 men and three new battalions (Collingwood, Hawke and Benbow) for the R.N.D. were also on the way. The leading brigade of the 52nd Division was to sail on 20th May.

The artillery ammunition available on the spot for the M.E.F. on 18th May amounted to only 38,000 rounds 18-pdr., 1,900 rounds 4.5-in. how., 13,000 rounds 10-pdr., 1,570 rounds 60-pdr., and 2,000 rounds 6-in. how. In the case of the 18-pdr. and 4.5-in. how., these figures were respectively 50 and 60 per cent short of the normal Field Service scale, but an additional 24,000 rounds 18-pdr. and 2,300 4.5-in. how. were to be despatched on 29th May.

Owing to the shortage of artillery for the B.E.F. in France and of ammunition generally, the 52nd Division was to bring only one brigade of field guns and one brigade of obsolete 5-inch howitzers.

Manufacturing firms at this period were far behind their contract dates with the delivery of rifles for the New Armies, and this was increasing the difficulties of supplying armed drafts for the Mediterranean. On 15th May Lord Kitchener asked Sir Ian Hamilton how many unarmed drafts he could equip with rifles from casualties, non-combatants, and others unlikely to reach the firing line.



By the courtesy of the "Illustrated London News".

LANDING A 60-PDR. GUN AT W. BEACH

made against the whole breadth of the enemy's position. In this belief he was supported by General Gouraud who, with Colonel Girodon as his chief of staff, relieved General d'Amade in command of the French corps on the 15th May.

On the 18th May, after a personal reconnaissance of the ground from his front-line trenches, and an examination of the coast from the deck of a destroyer, General Hunter-Weston explained to his brigadiers the tactical methods he wished to employ when the next order to attack was issued by G.H.Q., and he instructed his infantry to carry out a gradual and systematic pushing forward of their front-line trenches until they were within assaulting distance¹ of the Turkish front line. Ground was, so far as possible, to be stolen from the enemy by night advances and without fighting, and stress was laid on the importance of husbanding artillery ammunition for the coming battle.

On the 24th May sanction was given by the War Office to the grouping of the three British divisions at Helles into a corps, with Hunter-Weston as corps commander. From this date, therefore, Lieut.-General Hunter-Weston officially assumed the executive command of all the British troops at Helles, and his new command was entitled the VIII Corps. Lieut.-Colonel H. E. Street of the 29th Division staff was appointed chief General Staff officer of the corps, but for some time only a skeleton staff could be provided, and the three divisions remained temporarily under G.H.Q. for administration.

By the end of the month the British force at Helles had grown in strength and efficiency. Reinforcements for the 29th Division had arrived. The Royal Naval Division now consisted of twelve battalions, each with an average strength of 700 rifles. The 42nd Division was developing into a seasoned formation. No orders had yet been issued for a resumption of the offensive, but General Hunter-Weston's plans for it were practically complete.

At the time of General Gouraud's arrival the French troops were still suffering from their heavy losses in the Second Battle of Krithia. Moreover, the ground in front of their line offered a more difficult problem than that which faced the British. The Turks, particularly nervous of any Allied progress along the shores of the Dardanelles, had been paying much attention to the defence of their left flank, and had completed

¹ "Assaulting distance" was to be 200 yards, so as to enable the field artillery to continue bombarding the hostile front line up to the moment of assault.

May. two lines of trenches, supported by four redoubts, on the crest of Kereves Spur. These trenches dominated the French lines. In addition, the right of the French line, and all the French back areas, were exposed to enfilade fire from mobile batteries on the Asiatic shore.

The four small redoubts on Kereves Spur were "Fortin Le Gouez", on the French right front; an unnamed work on a kidney-shaped underfeature of the spur known as "Le Rognon"; and "the Haricot" and "the Quadrilateral" redoubts; opposite the French left. The Quadrilateral was on the highest point of Kereves Spur with a commanding all-round view.

Under the influence of General Gouraud's forceful personality several units of the French corps made useful advances of their line during the last fortnight in May. Two attempts were also made to storm and hold the Haricot redoubt; but though on each occasion the redoubt was captured, so many of their officers were killed in the first rush that the Colonial troops were unable to hold it.¹ On the last day of the month, however, Fortin Le Gouez, on the extreme right, was captured by a surprise attack with very little loss, and incorporated in the French position.

General Gouraud fully shared the anxiety of his British colleagues for the capture of Achi Baba, and was confident that the task could be accomplished with the troops already on the spot. But an appreciation which he forwarded to G.H.Q. on the 20th May showed that as regards the best plan for the

¹ The total losses in these two attempts amounted to 30 officers and 4,500 men.

² This memorandum giving the French general's view of the situation is a document of unusual interest. In it he expressed the opinion that so long as the Turks remained in possession of both banks of the Dardanelles it would be unwise for the Allied fleets to renew their unaided attack on the Narrows. At present, he thought, the principal rôle must be played by the army, the navy doing what it could to assist.

The memorandum continued that though the position held by the Allies in the south was strong, it was also precarious. Owing to the whole area being under Turkish shell-fire, the situation of the Allies would continue to be precarious until Achi Baba was captured. The capture of that ridge seemed to him, therefore, to be a military necessity. It was also necessary from the point of view of the morale of the troops. Experience had shown that future attacks on the position would have to be prepared with all the care of a trench attack in France. As to tactical details, he favoured the plans attempted at the first and second battles of Krithia, i.e., the left of the line leading, and the whole front pivoting on the French right, strongly entrenched on Kereves Dere.

As to the future, he did not recommend an attempt to advance beyond Achi Baba, as it would take so long to reach the Narrows by an advance from the south. (See Sketch 11.) The main attack on the Narrows could be more profitably based on Anzac Cove, where, although the difficulties were equally great, the distances were much shorter. If, therefore, the British Government decided to send out two fresh divisions, he considered

future main offensive he had arrived independently at the May. identical conclusion reached by Sir Ian Hamilton.

Turkish accounts of the fighting in the southern zone during this period state that the Allied activity cost the Turks an average loss of 300-400 men a day. The artillery and engineer commanders on the Turkish southern front at this time appear to have been Germans, and there was a German Chief of the Staff. The only German unit with General Weber, the German commander of the Southern Group, was a naval machine-gun company drawn from the *Goeben* and *Breslau*.

THE GERMAN SUBMARINES

The early achievements of British submarines in the Marmara have already been described,¹ and it will be remembered that the first of these vessels to meet with complete success was *E14* (Lieut.-Commander E. C. Boyle), which entered the Marmara on the 27th April and returned to Helles on the 18th May. Next morning, when the Turks were attacking at Anzac, another British vessel, *E11* (Lieut.-Commander M. E. Nasmith), successfully negotiated the perilous passage, and a few days later sank a Turkish transport lying at the arsenal quay at Constantinople. Thenceforth for the rest of the campaign one or more British submarines were always in the Marmara, and the enemy's sea communications with the peninsula were permanently interrupted.²

they should be landed at Anzac and employed in enlarging the Australian holding in that neighbourhood, preparatory to a general attack on the line Caba Tepe—Maidos. Meanwhile the troops in the south should continue pushing forward to Achi Baba, and as soon as that ridge was captured it should be made the centre of a strong system of trenches to guard the southern end of the peninsula. Leaving a minimum garrison to hold these trenches, every available man should then be transferred to Anzac to take part in an operation which would "isolate the Turks in the south, destroy the whole system of Turkish defences at Nagara and Chanak, and open the Straits for the fleet".

General Gouraud remarked that an alternative solution would be a landing at Besika Bay and an advance on Chanak. But he did not recommend this course unless the British Government would send out an additional 100,000 men.

¹ Vol. I. Chapter XVII.

² The German official naval account states: "The activity of the enemy's submarines dislocated the conveyance of reinforcements very seriously and caused many disagreeable losses." It adds that after the sinking of the Turkish transport at the quay no further troops were forwarded to Gallipoli by sea. There was not enough wheeled transport to send supplies by road, so most of the food for the army had always to be taken by water. But it was "a hand to mouth business. . . . The activity

May. But it was not only the Turks who were faced by a submarine menace. Since the beginning of May three German U-boats had been reported as making for the eastern Mediterranean, and to the British admiral at the Dardanelles the news of their approach was a matter of anxious concern. Not only would it be most difficult to support the army on the peninsula with heavy naval guns if U-boats reached the Ægean; but the invading troops, unlike the Turks, were entirely dependent on sea-communications, even the temporary interruption of which might have disastrous consequences.

For the first fortnight after the landing the anchorages at Helles and Anzac had been filled with merchant shipping of all descriptions. There were in addition seven large ships of war at Helles and four at Anzac, protecting the flanks of the army and helping to check the fire of the enemy's artillery. The presence of these vessels was very heartening to the Allied troops; their fire was of material assistance in checking the activity of Turkish guns on the Asiatic shore, and its moral effect on the Turkish infantry was still considerable.

On the 17th May, owing to a report that one U-boat had already reached the Ægean, the warships at Helles were reduced from seven to four and those at Anzac from four to two. The majority of the bigger merchant vessels lying off the peninsula were ordered to Mudros,¹ and no more large transports were allowed to proceed north of that island. All troops and stores arriving at Mudros for the peninsula were in future transhipped at that port, and completed their journey in light-draught ferry steamers which ran every night from Mudros to Helles and Anzac.

The U-boat menace also brought to a head the problem of the future location of British G.H.Q. Up to this time, as there was no room for their offices ashore, Sir Ian Hamilton and his Staff had continued to live on board the transport *Arcadian*, anchored a few yards from W Beach, with direct cable communication to the various subordinate commands. But after a hostile submarine had been reported in the neighbourhood, the admiral insisted that the *Arcadian* must at once seek shelter, and, with G.H.Q. still on board, she was sent across to Imbros. Here the wide mouth of Kephalo harf our had already been

"of hostile submarines was a constant and heavy anxiety, and if communication by sea had been completely severed the army would have been faced with catastrophe." "Der Krieg zur See 1914-18: Die Mittelmeer Division", Ch. xv.

¹ All animals still on board ships, and not likely to be wanted for the present, were sent back to Egypt.

protected to some extent against submarine attack, and here, May 18, the admiral's flagship was to be stationed.

The position of Imbros, 18 miles from Anzac and 15 from Helles, was in many ways suitable as a location for General Headquarters. Cables connecting the *Arcadian* with both these beaches were laid next day by the cable-ship attached to the fleet; and, with the help of a destroyer placed at the permanent disposal of the Commander-in-Chief, either of the two main beaches could be reached in little more than half an hour. It was at first hoped that the stay of G.H.Q. in Imbros harbour would only be temporary. But owing to continued lack of room on the peninsula and the necessity of releasing the *Arcadian* for transport duties, all G.H.Q. offices were landed on the island on 31st May, and remained there till the end of the campaign.

On the 25th May the German submarines struck their first blow. The battleship *Triumph*, cruising off Anzac, was suddenly torpedoed, and sank in twenty minutes in full view of the opposing armies. Thanks to the skilful handling of the escorting destroyer *Chelmer*, very few lives were lost; for the destroyer came up under the sinking ship's stern-walk and rescued most of the crew before she capsized. Shore boats dashed out to save the remainder. These were fired on by a Turkish battery, but it is pleasant to acknowledge that a moment later this firing was stopped, apparently by higher Turkish authority, till the work of rescue was over.

The swift and unexpected destruction of this battleship, whose dominating presence off the beach had been an immense moral support to the invading troops, was a great shock to all the Anzac corps. Many must have realized for the first time, as they watched her slowly sinking, the ever-present anxieties of the naval Commander-in-Chief; for it was now apparent to all that their communications were threatened, and that their very existence depended on the safety of the fleet. "It was a nerve-racking sight," wrote a senior officer in his diary that evening, "and has done none of us any good to see it."

After the sinking of the *Triumph* the larger warships were recalled to Imbros; but the following day Admiral de Robeck decided that, risk or no risk, the army must not be deprived of naval support, and that in addition to destroyers off Anzac and Y Beach, one battleship must be maintained at Helles and another in the Straits to check the Asiatic fire.

In accordance with these arrangements the battleship *Majestic* proudly returned to Helles on the evening of the 26th and anchored, with her nets out, and surrounded by small

May. craft, about a quarter of a mile from W Beach. Early next morning she, too, was torpedoed and sank in a quarter of an hour. Every boat at Helles rushed out to pick up the crew, and luckily once again the loss of life was small.

After this second disaster the number of supporting ships was further reduced. The policy of keeping battleships off the coast was abandoned, and until the arrival of monitors and "blistered" cruisers from England, the daily support of the army was entrusted to destroyers.¹ The flagship *Lord Nelson* was sent away to Mudros, but the admiral, anxious to remain on the scene of action, transferred his flag to the yacht *Triad*.

Thus, in the short space of two days, the U-boat attack succeeded in freeing the Turkish army from the continuous menace of heavy naval guns, and the general policy now adopted by the British admiral was that battleships should only leave harbour when actually required to support the army, and should then be employed only for short periods and in an area previously searched by aircraft and destroyer patrols.

June-
July. The Turkish garrison was elated and the invading army correspondingly depressed by the departure of the big ships, and in one respect in particular their withdrawal was a serious blow to the Allies. The Turkish artillery on the Asiatic shore, no longer molested by naval gun fire, soon became more active against the beaches and back areas at Helles, especially against the exposed French zone, and neither the French nor the British had sufficient heavy guns ashore to be able to check its fire. During the month of June the number of Turkish guns on the Asiatic coast was steadily increased, and though the damage they did was seldom very great,² their fire was a severe strain upon the resting troops and the men at work on the beaches. Not until the middle of July, when the French had erected a number of coast defence batteries at Sedd el Bahr, and several monitors armed with heavy guns had arrived from England, could this shelling again be kept in check, and throughout the campaign it was never wholly subdued.

As regards the front-line systems the loss of battleship support had not the same effect. It was soon found that for all ordinary purposes, such as the guarding of the Anzac flanks, destroyers with 4-inch guns were almost as effective as the larger vessels, and whenever a heavy bombardment was asked for by the army the battleships and cruisers came out as before,

¹ The *Ermouth*, a battleship with heavy net fittings, was held in reserve at Imbros, which as soon as the defences of Kephalo Bay were completed became the destroyer base. Three battleships were then kept at Imbros permanently, to go at short notice to the army's help.

² See Appendix IA.

whatever the risk, returning to Iiabros or Mudros as soon as their task was over.

Thanks to the efficient precautions adopted by the Allied fleet it was many weeks before the German submarines could register another success, and they were never able to exercise a decisive influence over the campaign. From an administrative point of view, however, the difficulties created by their presence were immense, and owing to the restrictions which had to be enforced on traffic between Mudros and the peninsula the Q.M.G.'s staff and the administrative services and departments were confronted with a problem of grave and increasing complexity.

It was believed at the time that three German submarines were operating in the Ægean, and this number was correct. In addition to the large *U21* (Commander Hersing) which had been sighted passing through the Straits of Gibraltar, and was responsible for the destruction of the *Triumph* and the *Majestic*, two small boats, *UB7* and *UB8*, had been sent to Pola by train in sections, and reached the entrance to the Dardanelles towards the end of May.

Commander Hersing of *U21* had left Germany on the 25th April, and after an adventurous voyage, and a refit at Cattaro on the Dalmatian coast, had reached the peninsula on the morning of the 25th May. After sinking the *Triumph* and the *Majestic*, he proceeded to Constantinople, where he was greeted by the Turks as their saviour. A month later he returned to the Ægean, and sank a French transport, but this was his only further success. April-Sept.

Three more small U-boats eventually reached Pola, and, like the first three, proceeded to Constantinople. Some of these were principally employed in conveying to the Turkish capital special war material which could not be obtained in Turkey, but one of them succeeded, on the 13th August in sinking the British transport *Royal Edward*, on passage from Alexandria to Mudros with over 1,400 troops. Of this large complement only a third were picked up by the escorting destroyers.

Later in the campaign several large U-boats were sent by sea to the Mediterranean where, amid the islands of the Archipelago, they were able to do considerable damage to shipping. In the month of September out of an available total of 43 German U-boats, there were no less than 14 in the Mediterranean or at Constantinople. The fact that so large a proportion of her submarine strength should have been concentrated in the Near East is an interesting sidelight on the

importance which Germany attached to the safety of the Dardanelles. Commenting on this distribution a German naval writer¹ admits that these vessels were not fulfilling the main purpose of the submarine war, namely to force England to make peace by cutting off her imports. He adds: "The struggle at the Dardanelles, however, was at that time the burning centre of interest. If the Dardanelles were forced by the Entente Germany had lost the war."

¹ Korvettenkapitän A Gayer in "Die deutschen U-Boote in ihre Kriegführung 1914-18", ii.

THIRD BATTLE OF KRITHIA

The Opposing Lines, 4th June.

