

COLONEL HARRIS, V.D.

HOW HE DIED.

Lieutenant-Colonel Hubert Harris, commanding the 5th Light Horse Regiment, was killed in action on Gallipoli on the night of July 31. His death was a distinct loss to our brigade (writes "Trooper Bluegum" in the "S.M. Herald," from Anzac, August 7).

It is a curious fact that the only man hit in the regiment that night was its commander. They were in the trenches blazing away and occupying the attention of the Turks while the infantry on our left blew up the enemy's trench, dashed out, bayoneted the defenders, and captured the position. There was a wild fusillade by the enemy's riflemen, and a heavy bombardment of our lines. One unlucky bullet came through a loophole, struck Colonel Harris in the neck, and he died in a few minutes.

There was plenty doing along the whole league-long line that night. But the main "stunt" was left to MacLagan's famous 3rd Infantry Brigade. The Turks had sapped in and dug trenches opposite Tasmania Post. They looked dangerous, and it was thought they would try to undermine our trenches and blow us up. So we mined in under them, and blew up their advanced trench. On our left the New Zealanders made a lively demonstration to keep the enemy opposite engaged, and the big guns blazed away at the main Turkish position. From the sea a warship fired high explosives in the same direction. Then a captain with a storming party of the 11th Infantry Battalion dashed out with great gallantry and seized the objective. They used boards to surmount the barbed wire entanglements, swept down on the Turks, bayoneted and shot about 50 of them, and entered into possession. Engineers immediately bolted out under a heavy fire, and hurriedly built up sand-bag defences. And having got it the 11th held on.

Meanwhile the 2nd L.H. Brigade on the right poured a heavy fire into the Turkish trenches on the immediate left of the captured position. All attempts at reinforcing the Turkish advanced line were thus frustrated, and no counter-attack had any chance of getting home. Thinking a further attack was intended from Rynie's Post, the Turkish artillery concentrated their field guns on the Light Horse, and the bombardment was terrific; yet and here is the luck of the game—not one man in the firing line of the 6th Light Horse was wounded. I was up with B Squadron, and the hail of shrapnel was something to remember. That was about half-past 10 at night, and, the moon having just risen, we concentrated our rifle fire on the enemy's trenches, leaving our artillery to deal with their reserves. Then it was that the fatal bullet killed Colonel Harris.

In a special order issued by General Birdwood next day reference was made to the excellent qualities of Colonel Harris, and to the conspicuous ability he had shown during the few months he had led his regiment on Gallipoli. We of the Sixth knew his value, and liked him; but the Queenslanders loved him, and would follow him anywhere. He was a comparatively young man, and not yet 45 years of age. He started his soldiering in the Brisbane Grammar School cadets, and then became

started his soldiering in the Brisbane Grammar School cadets, and then became a bugler in the Queensland Rifles. Later on he joined the Mounted Infantry, and volunteered for the South African War, going with the Second Queensland Contingent as a lieutenant, and returning a captain. He maintained his interest in the military forces after his return, became adjutant, and later on succeeded to the command of the 13th Australian Light Horse Regiment. Curiously enough, Col. Spencer Browne, whom he succeeded in that command, and Lieutenant-Colonel Stodart, who succeeded him, have also come to the war. For five years Lieutenant-Colonel Harris commanded the 13th Regiment, and then was placed on the unattached list. When the war broke out, he offered his services, and in November last took command of the 5th Light Horse Regiment, in Colonel (now Brigadier-General) Rynie's 2nd Brigade. He wore the Victoria Decoration and the Queen's South African ribbon with five clasps.

So here in the hills of Gallipoli there passes to the Great Beyond another good Australian, a brave and gallant officer, a kindly and courteous gentleman. The Americans used to sing "John Brown's body lies a-moulding in his grave; his soul goes marching on." So the Fifth Regiment may well feel that the spirit of Hubert Harris will go with them on to victory.

We buried him next night. The Dean of Sydney, Chaplain Colonel Talbot, officiated, assisted by Chaplain Captain Gordon Robertson. Officers and men of the regiment—all who could be spared from the trenches—attended with Major Wilson, who assumed command of the Fifth. Also present were Brigadier-General Rynie and staff, Lieutenant-Colonel Cox of the Sixth, and Lieutenant-Colonel Arnott of the Seventh. As the earth was shovelled in the Brigadier remarked sadly, "The brigade has lost a gallant officer and Australia a patriot."

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