

SHOT THROUGH THE WRIST. WHILE CARRYING DESPATCHES.

PRIVATE JAMES LYNCH.

The following are extracts from letters to Mr T. W. Lynch from his son, Private Jas. Lynch, who was wounded on 9th August, and at time of writing was in St. George's Hospital, Malta. The first letter is dated August 15th.

“This is a great place. I never dreamed of getting to this historic locality. They tie you down very much when in the hospital. You don't get a chance of having a look around until you are really convalescent. I understand we get 2s per week while here, pretty hot, eh Dad?

I must try and tell you something of our big advance, which started last Friday (6th August) at daybreak. On our extreme left a division of Kitchener's Army made a fresh landing, then came the Maoris, N.Z. Mounted Brigade, Gurkha Brigade, N.Z. Infantry Brigade, and in amongst this crowd was a Brigade of Australian Infantry and in the rest of the line N.Z. Infantry Brigade. The right was composed of Australs, both Mounted and Infantry. From what I can gather from some of the wounded who came aboard the Hospital Ship after me, things were going very well at the start but the casualty list will stagger old New Zealand. They will be much greater than at the landing. Is Tom with the 5th Reinforcements? Having had no mail for over 9 weeks I have no idea where he is. I suppose the mails are going astray. At any rate the 5th did not land for the attack, so I was relieved a good deal. It is wretched having a brother on the Peninsula. I met a young Australian on the Hospital Ship (where by the way the nurses were kindness itself, and didn't they work—like navvies) who lost his two elder brothers beside him during the attack and was himself wounded in the head. He was only 18 or 19 at the most. There were over 1000 wounded on our ship, over 70 of whom died on the way to Malta. It is the gruesome side of warfare you see on a hospital ship.

The attack started at dawn. We had been marching all night from 9 30 the evening before. Where we attacked the Turks offered very little resistance, but scaled for the trenches further back and before we could dig ourselves in the old machine guns were sawing off bullets galore and there was shrapnel to burn. It was very unhealthy, especially when there is no cover as we had it. I got cracked about midday when coming back from General Johnstone (in command of N.Z. Brigade) with a message to Colonel Hughes (Commanding our Battalion). To tell you the truth I never expected to reach General Johnstone, let alone get back again. It was while coming back I got a bullet through the wrist.

It went right through except for shattering the bone a bit. I was very lucky, and a spell won't do me any harm after over four months on the old Peninsula. Our Battalion got a very crook spin. You will have seen the casualty list long before you get this. There is not one of our section left now (that is the Main Body Section).

So far the heat here has been pretty solid. Last night it was very hot but I believe it will get cooler from this on. There are some great bathing places here. It narks you not being able to have a swim.

"This afternoon I am going to another Hospital to see Tom Cunnard, who is not too well I hear. Some of the wounded who have just come in say the 5ths had landed and were in the big smash up. Don't forget to pray for our chaps out here."

A second letter dated August 30th, received by the same mail says:—

"I wish I could get some news from old Timaru. Malta is a great place. Last night I went for a walk into Valetta. It is a beautiful place and was at its best. It was celebrating the feast of some Saint, St Julian I think, after whom one of their many beautiful little bays is named. There are thousands of wounded here and the people of Malta are very kind. We were nearly going to Sicily. I understand the Italian Government made an offer to accommodate so many of our wounded, but it had to be declined as it was too late to make preparations before our big advance. Who do you think is here? He arrived a few days after me—**Gordon McDonald**. He got a bad crack down the shin bone with shrapnel and apart from that he is not too well and will probably be sent to England. Jack Gillies is also here. He has had rather a bad time but is grand now. Tom Cunnard is still in bed. He has been under four operations. George Niall has gone to England. So has Charlie Groves, in fact quite a lot of Australasians have gone home. The Maltese are a fine looking race and they are so good hearted, even the type of man who does the dirty work around the hospitals will do anything to oblige you. The ladies of Valletta and Keima are untiring in their efforts to treat the wounded from when they land on the pier.

"Although this war game is no joke it is surprising the fun we get out of it, especially if you are with a good crowd. I hope it doesn't last the winter. In Gallipoli the rain and snow will be bad. These Turks are stubborn, and the women are also fighting now, not old women but flappers. We caught one out on our left the day we advanced, about sixteen years of age, with 24 identity discs around her neck. One girl sniper getting 24 scalps is a bit hot. She is one of the many girls who are now dead. But I do not think it is possible for any nation's women to work as ours have. You want to be in a hospital town to see it.

"How is golf? The day I left the Peninsula I saw Ben Sparrow, looking well. Last week I wrote to Mrs Gillespie. After losing poor Dug it must have been a shock. With all the good chums I have on Gallipoli I got a sickener when Dug

went. He was a great chap. He made friends galore and was really most popular with all hands. There is a cricket ground here and when the aim gets better I intend having a knock. The chap next bed to me is a great sport, cricket, football, golf, tennis, boxing! In fact he is an authority on any game but I floor him in a good few arguments. Altogether he is a fine chap, Pennington by name. Goodness knows when I will get a mail. They will go to Gallipoli and then back to Alexandria and when they find out where I am the letters will be worn out. Being at war you are not altogether away from sport. I have seen about 1000 of us bathing from the piers we had erected at Anzac, a place which the Turkish batteries commanded from the right and left flanks. They would wait for the best time, when big crowd was bathing! then Bash! Bash! and all hands would hook up their clothes and off into shelter. But not everybody would have the luck to get out of it. Each day there were chaps blown to eternity. Yet when the shelling ceased back they would go to finish the dip."

Mr Lynch also received the following note from Lieutenant Colonel John Gethan Hughes (well known in Timaru years ago) commanding the South Canterbury Battalion. The note is dated Gallipoli Peninsula, August 22nd, and runs "Dear Mr Lynch, your son was hit on the 6th when carrying despatches. I regret I can give you no particulars as to his whereabouts. All we know is that he was wounded in the arm and got away for the Hospital Ship. Since taking over command of the brigade (1st June) he has been constantly near me and I have got very fond of him. Although wounded he delivered his message and returned with the answer under extremely heavy fire. I have sent his name to headquarters for gallantry. I trust you will soon hear of him and that he is mending".

(Private Lynch is now in England).

Timaru Herald. 11 January 1916 (page 2) [30/10/2015]

ROLL OF HONOUR

Information was received from the Defence Authorities yesterday by Mrs Julia McDonald, of York Street, that her son, Sergeant Gordon McDonald, 15-136 (later 15-120) had died of wounds on January 5th in a military hospital at Devonport. This young soldier was between 23 and 24 years of age. He went to the Waimataitai school and afterwards was employed in Messrs Tripp and Rolleston's office. His health requiring a more out-door life, he left this firm and became clerk to Millar Bros, builders. He was a prominent member of the Pirates football club and was well known in athletic circles. He joined the First Reinforcements as a private, was promoted Sergeant at Trentham, and was attached to the Headquarters Staff there and in Egypt. He was wounded in the knee at Gallipoli on August 16, and was taken to Malta. Later, news was received that he was suffering also from malarial fever, and was in hospital at Devonport. His mother received a letter from him not long ago written from the hospital and he wrote then in good spirits. A younger brother is employed by Messrs Quirke and O'Brien, bakers. The official telegrams conveyed expressions of sympathy which will be endorsed by all who knew the young man and his family.

Mr Richard Campbell, 6 Stafford Street, yesterday received a telegram from the Minister of Defence stating that a cable had been received that his son, 8-2703 Private Alan W. Campbell, had been admitted to the 2nd London General Hospital slightly sick. (It is understood that the sickness is dysentery.)

Press. 13 January 1916 (page 7) [27/10/2015]

SERGEANT G. MACDONALD.

Word has been received of the death in England on the 5th instant, from wounds inflicted on August 7th at Gallipoli, of Sergeant Gordon Macdonald, of the Canterbury Divisional Headquarters. Deceased was a brother of Mr J. W. Macdonald, solicitor to the Public Trust Office, and was twenty-three years of age. He was a law clerk, and had lived all his life in Timaru.