

## **CONDITIONS IN EGYPT. PREPARING FOR THE DERVISHES**

In a letter written from Bahig on the 6th of December, Private Stanley E. Davey, of Lord Liverpool's Own, throws some light on the preparations which were made for the fighting, some of which (as we now know) took place on Christmas Day, though his friends do not yet know whether Private Davey took part in that engagement. The writer, who is a nephew of Mr John Finlay, of Tokaora, and a younger brother of Corporal F. J. Davey, of Te Kiri, says, *inter alia*:

My platoon were put off here at Bahig, which is 31 miles from Alexandria and 49 miles from Dabba. It is at Dabba that most of the fighting is likely to be. When we got here we were confidentially told that we had an enemy of 3000 men to face from somewhere in this desert. They are the Dervishes, and are fully armed and equipped, and as we have on a previous occasion been given a demonstration of their devilish and "ask-for-no-mercy" tactics, we have to keep a good look out in case of any attack. As soon as we got here we had to build a trench to protect our four tents, which had been pitched close to the railway line. From one end of this trench we dug another one up on to a slight hill some 30 yards away, and here built a redoubt of stones, so that our sentry posted there can see over the country without being very easily seen himself. Yesterday we had a holiday, and had to wash the clothes we were wearing. The others are in our kit bags at Alexandria, and are coming up any time. It was the first Sunday we had had off, as there had always been found any amount of work for us to do. Sunday in this country is practically the same as any other day. As Greece is likely to be soon at war against us, we have been warned to put the station in a good state of defence, and consequently have been carrying stones to build a wall around it for the last three days. There is timber coming through to-night to make a storeroom for the cook's necessaries, and this is going to be put up some twenty yards from the station lobby. Our water tank is going to be shifted from its present position up another 100 yards nearer the station, and then we will not be starved out if an attack comes, with everything in a well guarded and barricaded place. We will be camped around the station and can easily take our posts on the sound of the alarm and see that nothing happens to the station and telephone communication. We were sent up here to do this and must not fail in our task, as the lives of many of our comrades are at stake up at Dabba. Since arriving here there have been a great number of troop trains going through on their way to Dabba.

*New Zealand Herald.* 10 October 1916 (page 4) [01/08/2015]

## **MEN WHO HAVE FALLEN.**

### **PERSONAL PARAGRAPHS.**

#### RIFLEMAN S. E. DAVEY.

Rifleman Stanley Edward Davey, killed in France, was the youngest son of Mr. Geo. Davey, of Temuka. He was 22 years of age, and was educated at the Temuka District High School, where he passed the Civil Service examination with honours. He was appointed to the Native Land Department, Wellington.

## THE CASUALTY LISTS

The casualty lists daily appearing in the *Star* bring the war a little nearer home to us. Amongst those who have paid the great tribute is Rifleman Stanley E. Davey, younger brother to Corporal Frank J. Davey, of Te Kiri, who was wounded at Gallipoli. Rifleman Davey, in writing from North-west Egypt, where his regiment was engaged, to his uncle here (Mr John Finlay) gave a very vivid account of his company's doings there; it was the first account of the Liverpools being in action, and the letter appeared in your paper. Since then the regiment has gone to France. Of a family of five sons in the Davey family (Temuka) one has been to Gallipoli and wounded, one killed in France, and two other sons are either on the water or in camp. Stanley, before joining, was for some years in the Native Department, Wellington. On Saturday last many relatives about here received letters from those at the front, but will never see their dear ones again in the flesh. The following extracts from a letter from the late Rifleman Davey to his cousin, will be of general interest as showing the mode of warfare. The letter is dated August 16th from "somewhere in France":

The night we went up from our billet we just missed being badly knocked about, just getting into the support trench for shelter in time. The Germans shelled a house opposite the billet we had just left, half an hour after our leaving it, so you can just imagine what we missed in the way of casualties. We went through several bombardments and had some pretty narrow shaves from being wiped out. Our company seems to have a lot of luck behind it. One night, the hottest I have ever had, we had a raid on, and we had to put up with artillery and trench mortar fire for three hours and a half. None of us in the platoon got a scratch during the whole proceedings. We went back shortly after this into the subsidiary trenches for a rest, and then back into town for awhile until now we have moved here for a rest, for how long we cannot say.

The country around here is beautiful indeed just now. All around there is a great deal of land with standing ripe crops upon it, and it looks very nice. Some of us are going to do a bit of harvesting for the people, in the course of the next day or two. We are having route marches every day now to get us fit again, in order to be able to stand what we have to put up with in our next move. By the way, I saw Pat Henry on Sunday, and told him you were asking after him. He is all right, so far. I met a fellow the other day from Hawera, who knew you all pretty well, also the Luxtons. He asked me if I was a Finlay. He was in the medical corps. I did not ask him his name, so cannot tell who he was. Personally I am all right, though at times I feel a bit seedy."