

GALLIPOLI

By Ern Camden 1915

1/

I stood midst the lads on the old Gunboat,
As we drew near the Anzac Cove;
And many a laugh, and many a joke,
Was heard from those boys: By Jove.
They were Lads of true blue, who had come to fight,
From over the deep blue seas;
And many brave souls were to take their flight,
 Never more their loved ones to see.

2/

The C.O. gave the word to alight
Into pinnaces on the dark waters,
And with full Pack, rifle, & equipment bright,
Got aboard without talk or laughter.
"Let Go" came from the good Captain,
As we stood there watching & waiting,
And when she moved out, we felt the strain;
Our thoughts of past life were relating.

3/

Anzac hills in the distance, they looked black.
While little dugout fires were agleaming.
As we neared the shore, with a mighty roar,
The shells or'e our heads were screaming.
While we watched our dreadnoughts up in the north,
For the flash, and roar of her broadside guns;
While up in the hills the rifles spoke,
Like numerous, irregular, kettle drums.

4/

Our brothers who had gone before,
With might, and main were scrapping;
For the Turks were indeed a mighty force
When they woke from their peaceful napping.
It was Starlight night, and just midnight,
When up the cliffs we scrambled;
We were longing to gain the heights above;
But our packs, they almost did strangle.

5/

Weary and worn by our tedious march,
We rested on the road of artillery.
Down went waterproofs, Blankets warm,
And we slept the sleep of the weary.
But in the morning: at 4 A.M,
A rain of shrapnel burst on us,
But never a death, or wound, Amen.
As we took to the trenches before us.

continued ...

6/

I lent gainst the walls of the trenches dry,
As the sun peeped up, in its cloth of Gold;
And I did wonder? as I rubbed my eyes,
How many of my mates would be stiff, and cold,
Before the sun had taken her rest.
For my thoughts were taken far away,
Away over the seas, to the Golden West.
And I thought of those dear old peaceful days.

7/

Those thoughts took me back to the peaceful days,
When brother Reg, & I had ridden;
Side by side through the hills, & dells in day,
And by night; by the gum trees hidden.
When the stars peeped through a curtained sky,
Of trees of the Western Mountains;
And I longed again with him to ride,
To drink again from the natural fountains.

8/

I woke from my thoughts with a painful sigh;
When I remembered that on the morrow,
We'd be digging the graves of our lads just nigh,
And I guessed at the torture, & horror.
For our hearts were young, and had seen no sight;
Of the damned results of warfare;
But we steeled our nerves to the tough old fight,
That we fought at the crests of Sarid Bair.