Ward, Eric Harford
ASC 1905

This dossier features newspaper copies of various home letters. These give interesting “first person” reports on his experiences.

Lieut. Ward and the Coronation

In order to enable Lieut. Eric Ward to visit the Coronation of King George, in his private capacity, a number of his friends have started a subscription for the purpose of defraying his expenses there. ----- Lieut. Ward will probably leave Sydney for London next week.

National Advocate30/4/11 P.2

PERSONAL.

Mr. Eric Ward, who went to London in connection with the Coronation celebrations, intends to remain in the Homeland for about six months, to undergo a course of tuition in the art of suit cutting. He has already met several of his father's old friends, all of whom have been very kind to him, and it is understood that one of these gentlemen will give him the necessary coaching.
PERSONAL.

Lieut. Eric Ward, who has been away from Bathurst for nearly two years, and who is now in a position in a New York bank, will return to Bathurst at the end of next month. Lieut. Ward will have travelled right round the world. He intends to maintain his connection with the senior cadets on his return.

Bathurst Times 9/1/13 P.2

In Egypt

AUSTRALIANS ON THE DESERT. ERIC WARD'S INTERESTING LETTER.

Writing to his parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Ward, from Mena Camp under date, December 19, 1914, Private Eric Ward, who is with the Australian Expeditionary Force in Egypt, states: —

Last Sunday, 13th, I wrote you a hurried note from British Soldiers' Cafe in Cairo. We are settled down here now — 29,000 Australians and New Zealanders camped at Mena, about 10 miles from Cairo, and at the foot or the famous (Pyramids. Who would have thought I should ever arrive in such an historic spot. It is a most interesting locality. We visit the Pyramids, going into the many mysterious chambers inside and climbing up to the top on the outside, 480 feet. About 10 minutes' walk from the Pyramids is the Sphinx and the Sphinx Temple. I am becoming expert at riding camels and donkeys, which can be hired cheap.

The Australians seem to be very popular with the natives and we are picking up a few words of Arabic. We get much better food now. To give you an idea: We get tinned salmon or herrings in tomato sauce and bread and butter for breakfast; dinner — we get stew, cabbage and potatoes; tea — bread and jam, sometimes cheese. We buy any small luxuries at the dry canteens. Tomatoes and oranges are very cheap, and most things are no dearer than Australia. We have reveille at 6 a.m., breakfast 6.45, parade 7.45 all the morning, returning to camp about 3 p.m. for dinner. After dinner we are free for the remainder of the day, unless any fatigue parties are required.

Twenty per cent, of the battalion get leave each day and the remainder stay in camp and go exploring to Pyramids and Sphinx. There are three brigades of infantry in our part of camp; that is 12 battalions of about 1100 each — about 15,000, including transports. We expect to remain here about six or eight weeks from now and then go to the front. We are expecting trouble with Turks. Egypt was proclaimed a British protectorate yesterday, and we hoist the British flag in Cairo on Monday. The country between Cairo and Mena is extremely fertile. On arrival at the Pyramids it is nothing but desert. We are camped on the sands of the desert in a valley called Camp Valley, with nothing but flat desert and sand hills surrounding us.

We march out of camp each morning to our parade ground some three to five miles out, and skirmish in the desert all the morning, returning to camp at 2 p.m. with our rifles full of sand, and spend most of the afternoon cleaning them. Marching in the sand is very heavy, and the perspiration simply pours out of us as we trudge across the dazzling sands under the heat of the sun and the weight of 1 rifle and pack. We are getting used to it now, and are almost capable of doing a 20 mile canter before breakfast. I am feeling fit and enjoying the experience immensely. This seems to be a
much healthier life than tailoring. We have a new kind of money to get used to, that of piasters (Egyptian), 97 of which go to £1, being on the same principal as American can money. It was not a case of getting used to it with me; I simply fell into the idea at once. Our last pay was in piasters, and as we received 100 on account I feel as though I have money to burn.

National Advocate (Bathurst) 26/1/15 P.4.
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Medical Report on an Invalid.

Station: Helouan
Date: 8th Jan. 1916

Unit: 1st Batt.
Regimental No: 1104
Rank: L/Cpl.
Name: WARD ERIC HARFORD

5. Age last birthday: 25
6. Enlisted on: 6th October 1914
7. Former Trade or Occupation: Sailor's Cutter
8. Disability: Synovitis & Bursitis of Right Knee
HOT WORK IN GALLIPOLI WITH THE AUSTRALIANS.

A STIRRING TALE.

ANOTHER LETTER FROM ERIC WARD.

Yesterday, we published a letter from Corporal E. H. Ward, who, till wounded recently, had been fighting in Gallipoli. Herewith another communication from the same soldier, written before that already appearing, in this he gives a most striking account of the landing operations:

"You have read the account of our landing, but my addition may interest you. Eight weeks ago we landed at ----, just after the 3rd Brigade under heavy shrapnel and ride fire from the enemy. We were towed ashore in open boats and when some distance from the shore with shrapnel bullets flying all round us. We jumped into the water waist deep, and waded ashore and formed up under cover on the beach.

Immediately afterwards we scaled a ridge 000 feet high, crossed over and advanced in the other side. Many fell wounded, some dead. On we went. A steady stream of cool and collected Australians filed down the zig-zag path on the downward slope, shells bursting all round us, bullets hissing. This was our only means of advance, to go through the low scrub meant death, as it had all been mined, slowly we gained the bed of the valley, which afforded more protection. Our comrades had already been in the firing-line, an hour or more and wanted ammunition. Along it went in small bags
and boxes passed from one to the other as we mounted the next steep ridge. Rein-
forcement wanted on the left was the cry. Most of us wore nearly done. We had
been up since 2 a.m. - very little breakfast, a big weight in ammunition and three
days food to carry. The booming of the big guns had filled us with excitement. We
landed at sun rise, consequently we were much fatigued. Having got on to the left
flank we fixed bayonets and charged 50 or 60 yards. The fire being too hot, we were
forced to take cover and gain extra ground by crawling. We were right in the open
and the Turks were well entrenched, having retired to their trenches. Here we lost
heavily under heavy machine gun fire, and were unable to get our own guns up to
account of the mountainous nature of the country. It was also very difficult to maintain
good communications on account of the ----- (sentences indistinct) ---- making it
impossible to......we were forced to retire a short distance.

However, the final result of the first day of operations was the establishment of a
strong opposition by us here. There were five other landings, four of which proved
very successful. We were well supported by the navy. During the afternoon of the
first day a strong counter attack by the enemy began and hard fighting took place. At
the end of an awful day, I found myself on the extreme left with about 50? Others
holding the ----? Called -------? The Battalion came up to reinforce us. The Turks got
right onto us in the moonlight, and we mistook them for Indians. Needless to say we
poured into them when we satisfied ourselves they were not Indians. On the 26th,
27th, and 28th April we were engaged constantly with the enemy, who made strong
and repeated counter attaches which were invariably repulsed. Early on the morning
of the 27th a fresh Turkish division was launched against us, every attempt and by
3pm had resumed the offensive.

To reiterate my actual experiences during the first four days of our fighting would take
me a week. The awful sights, and the nerve-racking experiences of these four
terrible days will be imprinted on my mind forever. You have no idea of the
exigencies of modern warfare, read the papers as much as you like, and you could
not form a proper idea. After four days we were relieved for a few hours to go down
to the beach and have a general clean up and rest. Here we mustered four hundred
and twenty-one out of our battalion of eleven hundred, the remainder being dead,
wounded and missing. For the first few days our losses were more than we wished
for, gradually they diminished as we improved our position. We have made several
attacks on different points of the Turkish trenches, and one night the Turks made a
determined attack all along our line. We gave them all they wanted. Our losses were
small compared with theirs, which were 2000 dead and 5000 wounded. They have
not been too anxious to come again since. We lost a number of our of officers the
first few days, among them being our Major, who was shot dead the first five minutes
in the firing line. I know of the fate of several Bathurst lads, but perhaps it would be
as well for you to read the lists in the papers yourselves as a lot of the information
one gets is only hearsay. Arthur Mead arrived hero 3 weeks after our landing, and I
met him for the first time (May 30th) in the trenches.

The Bathurst Times, 11/8/15 p.4

IN THE TRENCHES GALLIPOLI CAMPAIGN WITH THE AUSTRALIANS.

BATHURST BOY’S EXPERIENCES.

LETTER FROM ERIC WARD.
In a letter to his people, Lance Corporal E. H. Ward, who is announced as wounded, gives some graphic details of the doings at Gallipoli. Having described the landing at Gaba Tepe, he writes:

“Since then we have fought hard to hold the ground so preciously won. It is nothing but ridges in this part, ranging from 200 to 800 feet high, and covered with thick low scrub — most difficult country to fight in. We experienced great hardships the first couple of weeks getting water, food, and ammunition up the steep cliffs, but when we consolidated our position things improved, and it was not long before we enjoyed some hot meals in the trenches. Day and night we dug and fought. Sleepless nights, little water, iron rations, and much fatigue brought us a well-earned spell about 1500 yards from the firing line. After a few hours spell, we returned to the heights. We went into the trenches, which were only two feet deep in parts. Day after day we worked filling sandbags and making loopholes.

**SHRAPNEL.**

After 33 days in the trenches we were relieved to go down in the gully and spell for a week. Here we dug ourselves under the hill, safe from stray bullets and shrapnel. We were able to have a swim daily. Of course, we had to chance the shrapnel. The Turks shell the beach at different times of the day, and to see the magic way the beach and water is cleared when the first shell drops is rather laughable, but too often attended by serious results. The Turks fire from the hills in the rear and also right along the beach, doing great damage at times. It is a nasty experience to be in swimming and have shrapnel burst over or near one, you can imagine what chance one has when there are 200 bullets in one shell, which cover a space 200 yards by 25 yards. Most of our fellows killed and wounded have been caught by shrapnel or snipers. Looking for concealed snipers in the low scrub is a rotten job.

**SNIPERS.**

I happened to be one of a party of 20 sent out to shoot snipers. We returned with three less. One sniper caught some time ago was a human tree, and if he had not moved a little more than most trees do he would still be claiming his victims. He was covered with small green bushes, and his face. Hands and rifle were painted green. Trench life is not as bad as I anticipated. We are fairly comfortable now, and now we have more men the work is more evenly distributed. We now do 24 hours in the front firing line of trenches, and 24 hours in the trenches in the rear called the supports. In front one must be awake at all times, but in the supports one makes up for the strain of the previous night by resting and sleeping most of the day. It is a great strain on the mind keeping a look out. We are always having night attacks. One early morning attack (18th-19th May) resulted in the Turks losing 2000 killed and 5000 wounded. They have not come on in such force since. We didn't half give them some "Turkish delight." A few days later, we granted them an armistice to bury their dead. They have raised the white flag frequently, requesting a short truce to bury the dead. They deliver desperate counter attacks immediately we cease firing. Another joke they tried one night was to blow our charge on their bugles to get us out of our trenches, and then mow us down with their machine guns. We tumbled to their ruses the first Sunday, so this little joke failed. We learned quite a lot the first day at a great loss.

**FAIR FIGHTERS.**

"The Turks are not what they paint them. They are brave men, and very fair fighters so far. There is some of the flower of the Turkish army here. Our boys are much too daring. A great number have lost their lives through this. On the morning of the last
big attack lots of our follow were kneeling and sitting on top of the trenches regardless of the torrential hail of bullets and shrapnel; they would not come down until knocked down. Our boys have earned a great name and the admiration of the Tommies and navy. They call us the 'White Ghurkas,' but say we are mad the way we advance; we are much too fast for the Tommies. Some of the Turks have the idea that we are cannibals, and say they prefer to be shot than eaten alive: at least this is what the Turkish prisoners tell us.

IN THE DUG-OUTS.

One morning we had to deepen our section of the fire trench eight or ten inches. We had no sooner started to throw up the dirt than the Turks turned their howitzers on to us, and planked eighty odd shells in and around us; 37 ploughed up the earth in front of our trench, knocking down sandbags and half filling the trench with sandbags and earth and almost suffocating us with vile smoke. Of course, we have protection against shrapnel in the form of dug-outs. When it becomes too hot we got under cover in the dug-out. These will not protect ono if a shell happens to burst into the trench, as I the case of being enfiladed. A dug-out I was in was rather uncomfortable, but I stuck to it until a bag of sand fell at my feet, with the empty shell still through it, and still smoking. I moved a short distance, fearing another may fall in the same place. They dropped four or five more about the trench, and ceased firing.

SHELL MUSIC.

This little stunt lasted an hour, only one or two being wounded. We never throw up dirt in the daylight now unless absolutely necessary. We literally 'smelt hell' while the shelling lasted. Some were half buried in dirt. The trench was full of smoke half the time, in which we choked and spluttered and cursed. The shells have a horrible sound, like a subdued train whistle mixed followed by the eye, and the smaller red shells cannot be seen in flight. You hear them coming, you bob down, and wonder, with every muscle tight and lips closed, 'Will it land on our bit of trench this time or not.' Then the whistle goes over or finishes in front with a hellish crash and much flying dirt and stones, and you are a little safer for a minute or so.

'HELL ITSELF.'

Our first day was like hell itself. What with, bursting shells, the booming of the big guns, and the incessant crackle of rifle fire, one could not hear himself speak. You have no idea of the exigencies of modern warfare; it's horrible. It is wonderful how quick one falls into it and how callous one becomes. The grim reality of war was brought home to us before leaving our transport when the first batch of wounded was brought back to the boat. When 1 took my place in the open boat my seat was near a great pool of blood and blood-stained equipment. I have seen some awful sights lately; perhaps it is better not to tell you about them. Still, war has its comic side, and we laugh to split our sides when a shell bursts amongst us when swimming and fails to hit any of us. I have a motto, 'Always merry and bright; every cloud is silver-lined' — not a bad one either for this game. I have a good bright mate who hails from Tasmania. We always sing this song— you must know it — when the 'shrap' is too warm. We have been together all through. We boast living as well as any two in the battalion.

THE MENU.
'I do most of the cooking, and 'some cook' I am. We have bread every other day now; half-a-loaf per man. I pound the hard biscuits into flour and make porridge; the same thing thick and allowed to get cold, cut into slices, and dished up with some jam doods and a little liquid tinned milk to represent cream is a fine pudding. We have various methods of dealing with the impregnable biscuit. We soak them in water and fry in bacon fat. One of my favorite dishes is bully beef rissoles. Our latest luxury is dried figs and prunes. Those who have money can buy tinned milk (1/6), eggs (4/ doz.); a hatful of rice for 6/, and other items from sailors on the beach.

LOSS OF THE TRIUMPH.

It is very hot now. The flies are awful, just us bad us the famous Nile flies. We are not allowed to use fresh water for washing, but we often go to the beach for a swim, which is a great boom. During our last spell near the beach I witnessed the sight of a lifetime — the sinking of H.M.S. Triumph. She was only a few hundred yards from land at the time. Steam tugs, torpedo boats, and all manner of craft raced to her assistance. We stood almost speechless on shore, and watched her gradually sinking and then turn right over. It was a terrible yet wonderful sight. All the time she was heeling over her gunners kept firing, which showed the bulldog breed of those who manner her. The last gun to fire seemed to be half submerged. The Triumph did great work here, being in action 17 times, and was hit 14 times. Her funnels were riddled with shells. She was sunk by a submarine on the 29th May.

I was speaking to poor Lieut. Hinde the first day we went back to beach to rest. He was not too strong, and was doing different duties on the beach. Some days later he was badly wounded by shrapnel. I heard he was very bad, and got a surprise when I read his name in the Sydney paper lists.

National Advocate 20/10/15 P.3

HOME AGAIN

SERGT. ERIC WARD'S EXPERIENCES ABSENCE OF NEARLY TWO YEARS.
BURIED IN HIS DUG-OUT.

Sergeant Eric Ward, eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. G. Ward, of Durham Street Bathurst, arrived home by the 4 p.m. passenger train on Saturday and no one
outside his own family knew that he was returning to Bathurst. Sergeant Ward was so modest that he did not desire any public welcome, and for that reason did not even acquaint his parents when he would arrive in Bathurst but a message was sent by the military authorities to his parents intimating the train on which their son was travelling.

Sergeant Ward, who is 26 years of age, was one of the first to enlist at the outbreak of the war. Prior to the war he was a captain in charge of the Bathurst cadet corps, and as in charge of the guard of honor to Earl Kitchener when that General visited Bathurst and unveiled the monument on King's Parade. When Sergeant Ward enlisted he went into camp at Rosehill, and being anxious to get away to the front as soon as possible made inquiries as to the possibility of getting away with the first contingent. As all the other positions had been filled, Sergeant Ward, who was then Captain, decided to forego his stripes and join the first contingent, as a private he sailed on the first troopship, which left Sydney on 18th October, 1914. After a short time in Egypt, where he was promoted to Lance-Corporal, he went with the first batch, and took part in the memorable landing on the Gallipoli, Peninsula. He could tell many stories concerning the first couple of months on the peninsula, but as it has been related so many times it would not prove interesting to the general public. He was one of the small batch of men who held the first hill on the first night after the landing until reinforcements came along.

After he had been engaged ten weeks on active service among those rugged hills an eight-inch shell exploded within six feet of his dug-out, in which he was comfortably couching and the explosion, caused a large quantity of earth to fall and he was buried up to his "shoulders" in the dug-out. A large piece of lock had struck him across the knees, which injured the kneecap. He was dug out of the hole and taken to a place of safety some distance behind the firing line where his injuries were attended to. He was invalided back to Egypt and after his leg became sufficiently strong he was detailed for light duty and at different times was practically in all the camps in Egypt work was chiefly of clerical nature. It was in the Helouan Convalescent Home that he met Signaler Tom, Skeyhill, who visited Bathurst last week-end.

Sergeant Ward was attached to the 41h Battalion until four months ago, when he was transferred to the Army Medical Corps, and given the rank of sergeant. He was brought before the examination board on several occasions and on the last occasion was recommended for six months furlough. He left for home and arrived in Sydney on Thursday last 17th instant.

Sergeant Ward slated to our reporter in an interview last night that the 3rd Brigade was the first to land at Gallipoli and the Brigade in which he was a unit under Major Swannell followed. Major Swannell, who. By the way, brought an English football team to Australia some years ago, was killed on the day of the landing. Had the Turks but known how many Australians took part in that landing they could have, by force of numbers, driven the Australians into the sea.

They were three weeks getting rid of the Turk's snipers. Sergt. Ward related an incident where a small company, of which he was one, was detailed to hunt for snipers and when they had gone some distance up the mountain one of their machine guns opened fire on them, thinking they were Turks. The result was that there were six casualties and the remainder had to cut for their lives.
Lance-Corporal E. H. Ward Wounded

Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Ward received a cable Message yesterday to the effect that their son, Lance-Corporal Eric H. Ward, had been wounded in the knee at the Dardanelles and invalided to Cairo Hospital. He was one of the first to enlist from Bathurst

National Advocate 13/7/15 P.2.

Invalided Home.

Sergt. Eric Ward, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. G. Ward, of Bathurst, has been invalided home. Sergeant Ward is well known in Mudgee. He resided here for some time; his father being cutter in the tailoring department at Jas. Loneragans. Ltd.

Mudgee Guardian 28/8/16 P.2

Treated for Shell Shock
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES

Headquarters,
Victoria Barracks
MELBOURNE S.C.1
19 Nov 45.

MEMORANDUM for -

1. Headquarters,
NEW SOUTH WALES I OF C AREA

WARD, E.H., FORMERLY EMPLOYED AS T/CLERK, AAPC,
1916-1922: RECORD OF SERVICE.

For the purpose of establishing furlough entitlements,
Mr. Eric Harold WARD has stated that, after his discharge from
the A.I.F on 16th September, 1916, he served in the AAPC, Victoria
Barracks, Sydney, from 16th December, 1916, to 11th February, 1922.

2. The matter is accordingly referred for verification of
employment, whether such employment was continuous, and the reason
for termination of employment.

(SGD) C. B. IAFFAN Lt.Col.
for Major General
Deputy Chief of the General Staff.

Died 12/5/46