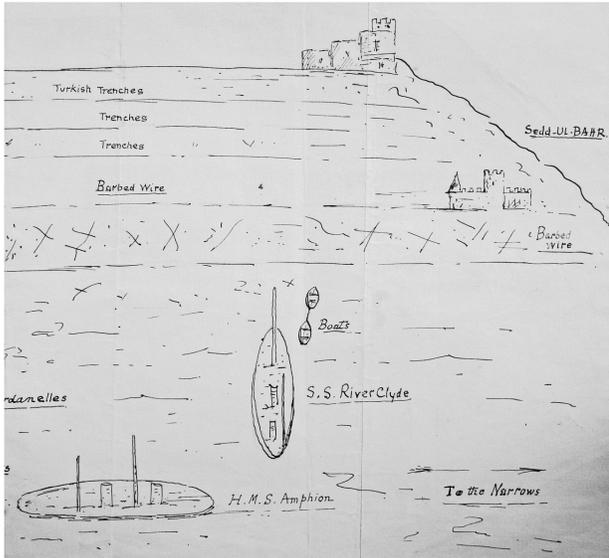


# Lost at V Beach, Gallipoli, 25th April 1915



## EMBARKATION

From Torquay the regiment moved to Nuneaton where it was reviewed by H M King George V.

It embarked at Avonmouth on S.S.AUSONIA and set sail on the 16<sup>th</sup> January, 1915.

Extract from the diary of soldier servant to Lieut Colonel Rooth.

"We went around the coast of Ireland, Queenstown and Cork. We were escorted by destroyers and on the 20<sup>th</sup> we saw the Rock of Gibraltar at night and on the 23<sup>rd</sup> we reached Malta. We left Malta on the 26<sup>th</sup> and arrived at Alexandria at 7a.m. on the 29<sup>th</sup>." They left Alexandria on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> April and proceeded to Lemnos. This was a marshalling point for transports and supplies prior to the landings.

The diary account of the landing on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> April continues.....

"Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> the day I will never forget. It was 4 o'clock when we got into small boats, four boats to one steam pinnace. It was not quite daybreak when we heard the Navy start firing; then we started to steam up the Dardanelles. The RIVER CLYDE was in front of us, she is a big ship. Well after an hour we came to the battleships. They were still firing over our heads. The QUEEN ELIZABETH made the boats shake when she fired her big guns. The RIVER CLYDE turned and ran up the beach as far as she could and then the Turks and Germans started firing their big guns and the shells were dropping all around us. When we got to the RIVER CLYDE the steam pinnaces let go of the ropes and the sailors started to row us to the shore, and then the rifle and machine-guns started firing at our boats. It was a sight I can not put on paper for some of us got out of the boats alive, but were killed in the water, some did not have a chance to move but were shot down like birds, and the sailors as well.

Six men out of our four boats got on the beach alive and unhurt; the Colonel was in one of these boats, but I did not see him fall.

We got on the beach under cover of a little ridge and could not help seeing the others cut down, for the Turks and Germans were only 70 yards away at places. The Old Fort which was supposed to be knocked down was full of snipers, and machine-guns in a trench in front of us, and on our left was a hill full of trenches, so no wonder they had us all ways. A few more got on land and one officer. I tried to see if we could get at them, so I put up a rifle and a cap on it, and it was not much up in the it before it was cut to pieces, rifle & all, and we got covered with dirt. We went along a little further to see if we could get a chance as it was getting on for 12 o'clock. We got on the beach about a quarter past six, for we heard six strike on the last ship we passed. As we went on we came to the Old Fort and there we found barbed wire and live wire; we started cutting it down. There was only 20 of us and an officer. A good many went down when the Turks saw us; seven of us got back, five unhurt and two wounded & the others were all killed. We got the wounded under cover."

## POSTSCRIPT

Richard Rooth's brother has written (in 1927), "the pictures, the manuscript and the sketches illustrate the landing of my brother in words and deeds that I could not hope to emulate & will bear vivid evidence of the horror of this landing".

"It would seem from all the tales I have been able to collect that Lieut Colonel Rooth was shot through the heart as he attempted to land & fell in the water at the edge of the beach which was heavily protected by barbed wires laid in the water. He was buried at night under the supervision of a Captain Frankland of his own regiment and the spot was marked later by a wooden cross, a photograph of which was procured by Colonel Cyril de Putson who was of the Lancashire Fusiliers but at that time was on the staff of the French General Daumette (?). Colonel de Putson sent my mother some flowers plucked from the grave and these were



Memorial plaque in Highgate School



The River Clyde after she had struck the shore. The great



Grave marker on V Beach



Testing the enemy firepower

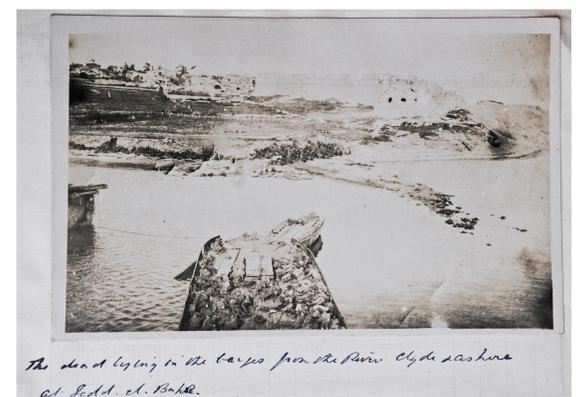
"Men leapt out into deep water, encumbered with rifles and 70lb of kit, and some died right there, while others reached the land only to be cut down on the barbed wire."

Whole boatloads of soldiers were slaughtered before they even reached the shore. The sole survivor from one cutter stood up to pole the vessel to safety and was shot down.

At one landing spot, an old coal ship, the River Clyde, was deliberately beached in the shallows for men to run ashore in relative safety from holes cut in its side, but they were instantly cut down by salvo after salvo of machine-gun fire from right, left and straight ahead the moment they appeared in the open. 'Plain murder,' was one man's heart-rending description of seeing his comrades fall.

There were amazing acts of bravery. Midshipman George Drewry, from Essex, stood up to his neck in the water with bullets splashing around him as he tried to lash flat barges together to make a passage to the beach — for which bravery he was awarded the Victoria Cross (one of five that day alone).

Extract from report in The Daily Mail. Below, lighters loaded with the dead awaiting burial



The dead lying in the barges from the River Clyde ashore at Sedd-el-Bahr.

