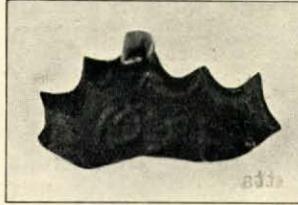


was inserted and the patient put back to bed. Death from asphyxia occurred about 2 a.m. next day, i.e. about twenty-eight hours after the accident.

A post-mortem was performed at 6 a.m. and the denture shown in the accompanying photograph was found at the bifurcation of the trachea.



The sharp points of the denture were embedded in the mucous membrane and the denture lay across the bifurcation. Swelling of the mucous membrane from œdema had gradually completed the occlusion of the airway.

The denture, which bears one small gold tooth to replace an upper incisor, was worn for æsthetic reasons and was not supplied by the Service authorities.

I have to thank Colonel A. C. Hammond-Searle, M.C., Commandant, Army School of Hygiene, for permission to forward this note for publication.

REFERENCE.

- [1] JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL ARMY MEDICAL CORPS, April, 1936, p. 240.

Echoes of the Past.

WAR EXPERIENCES OF A TERRITORIAL MEDICAL OFFICER.

BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR RICHARD LUCE, K.C.M.G., C.B., M.B., F.R.C.S.

(Continued from p. 205.)

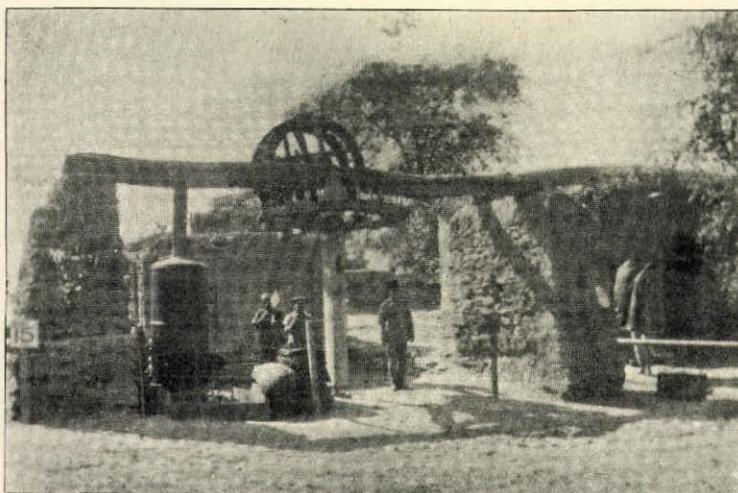
CHAPTER XIII.—THE FIRST AND SECOND BATTLES OF GAZA.

During the next few days our infantry were pouring into Rafa and by the 23rd the whole force, consisting of three infantry divisions, the 52nd, 53rd and 54th, two mounted divisions and the Camel Corps, was within striking distance of the enemy.

The morning of March 26 was fixed for the attack on Gaza. The 53rd Division, our old friends of Gallipoli and the Western Frontier, still commanded by General Dallas, was to have the place of honour, supported by the 54th Division. The 52nd was in army reserve. The command of

the attack was entrusted to Sir Philip Chetwode, G.O.C. of the Desert Corps. Sir Charles Dobell, the Force Commander, was on the ground and held the 52nd Division in his own hands. General Murray came up from Cairo for the occasion but did not take personal command. The attack was to be delivered at dawn. The rôle of the two mounted divisions and the Camel Corps was to cross the Wadi Ghuzzeh well to the east of Gaza, under cover of darkness, and moving round behind the town to form a cordon covering it from the north and north-west.

The Turks were known to have considerable forces at Beit Hanun to the north and at Sheria on the Beersheba line to the north-west. The duty of the mounted troops was to hold off any reinforcements the Turks might send up during the attack on the town.



Well at Khan Yunus.

The day before the move, March 25, was given up to a race meeting at Rafa, partly to mislead the Turks and partly to cheer the troops. It was held on a lovely piece of even ground close to Magruntein Hill, the scene of the battle of the month before.

Railhead had now reached Khan Yunus, an extensive village about five miles north of Rafa. Here the 54th Casualty Clearing Station had been opened for reception of casualties from the forthcoming battle. A supply of motor ambulances had been brought up as the country here was suitable for this form of transport. Only a very limited number had, however, arrived and none were actually placed at the disposal of the Mounted Division. We left camp on the morning of March 25, and crossing the sand dunes at Rafa moved northwards along the beach. The village of Deir el Belah, four miles from the Wadi and nine miles from Gaza, was reached about four p.m. Here the whole division was assembled.

Jaffa oranges were now in season and the natives had a small store for sale, but it did not take many days for our hungry army to exhaust all the supply that existed south of the Turkish Army.

Our Headquarters bivouac was in a charming orchard of figs, almonds and pomegranates. The pomegranates were in full bloom and their lovely masses of scarlet were a refreshing sight after the desert we had crossed. The house was a red-tiled modern building and belonged, we understood, to a Greek doctor in Gaza, who used it as a summer residence, but it had evidently been used for some time by Turkish officers as we found in an outhouse a goodly array of empty bottles many of which bore the names of German vintages.

Soon after dusk the Divisional Staff was summoned to hear the plans for the morrow and after this I had to draw up the medical orders for the three field ambulances by the light of a single candle beneath the open sky. We had left all kit that could not be carried on the horse at Rafa and as we were taking two days' rations there was not much room for office paraphernalia. All orders had to be written out and reduplicated with carbon papers in a field message book. The mobile sections of the three field ambulances and the immobile sections of the 5th and 6th Mounted Brigade grouped together, were to march out for our long trek at the rear of the column. The mobile sections were subsequently to rejoin their respective brigades and the two immobile sections to form a dressing station at the point on the Gaza-Beersheba road where it was crossed by the column. Here casualties were to be collected and retained until the end of the operation when they were to be evacuated by motor car, under arrangements made by the D.D.M.S. of the Desert Column, to the 54th Casualty Clearing Station at Khan Yunus. After getting the orders distributed a few hours were given up to a sleepless rest.

The Anzac Division moved out in front of our own as it had further to go; they were to hold the ground north of Gaza from the sea to Huj, we were to take that on their right from Huj to the Beersheba road and the Camel Corps behind us from the Beersheba road to the Wadi.

We started off about 1.30 a.m. The night was hazy and dark. The first part of our journey through the enclosed fields of Deir el Belah was rough going in the darkness. We seemed to be continually passing through gaps in cactus hedges with very deep ditches and more than one member of the Divisional Headquarters came to grief in negotiating them. The check at the gaps made it very difficult to keep touch in the darkness. After a while we got into more open country and then the slow march went on through the night. The fog became increasingly thick and the halts in front frequent. En route we passed the bivouac camps of the infantry. As dawn came we reached the banks of the Wadi which were very steep and rough. The fog did not clear till 10 a.m. and by this time we had reached the Gaza-Beersheba road where the Division assembled.

We moved on another mile or so and the troops were thrown out to

form a cordon. The 5th Mounted Brigade took the right flank, the 6th the centre and the 3rd Australian Light Horse were facing north, in touch with the Anzac Division which was on their left.

It was beautiful open rolling country. We were on high ground, broken on our left by the sharp almost insurmountable ridges of Mansura. Gaza and the sea lay beyond. From a point just west of us we could look down over the plain in front of Gaza across which the infantry must advance. We were not left altogether undisturbed. As soon as our brigades began to deploy, the Turkish artillery, from the direction of Sheria, started to pay us attention, but only effected one or two casualties.

The fog of the early morning had held up the infantry attack on Gaza which should have been delivered at dawn. It was not until noon that they were in a position to make the assault. From our point of vantage we could clearly see the 53rd Division about six miles away advancing in successive waves across the open plains and with glasses we could even see the gaps occurring in the lines as they moved.

Fortunately several wells had been found in the area we were occupying and practically the whole of our horses were watered in the course of the morning.

About 3 p.m. we were ordered to move forward to take over the ground hitherto held by the Anzac Division, who were now ordered to face about and make an attack on the town from the north. Our headquarters moved eastwards about three miles, to Beit Durdis, which was little more than two miles north of Gaza itself, but hidden from it by hills.

At 4.30 information was received that strong Turkish reinforcements were approaching from two directions, from Beit Hanun to the north and from Sheria to the east. The 3rd Light Horse and the 6th Mounted Brigades were moved forward to check them and soon a certain amount of rifle fire began. Our two Horse Artillery batteries were moved up to support the brigades and the enemy's advance seemed to be stopped for the time.

In the late afternoon we heard that the infantry attack from the south had not succeeded in taking the town and that we might have to return the way we had to come as soon as it was dark. Orders were sent to the dressing station to pack up and be prepared to move back, taking their patients with them.

The 5th Mounted Brigade had had a few casualties from shrapnel during the early part of the day but had never been seriously engaged. Each brigade was accompanied by the mobile section of its field ambulance and they were told to be prepared to bring back with them across the Wadi any casualties that might occur.

Darkness came down on us and with it the order to retire at 8 p.m. The main body of the staff was at the time separated from the General and in the darkness touch could not be regained. After some attempt to find him we started off on our weary march back over the ground we had

traversed so hopefully in the morning. It was a lovely starlight night so that there was no real need of the luminous compass though the course set us by the officer in charge was at first too much to the east and if we had pursued it, would have taken us into the lines of the oncoming Turks. As it was at one point of the route we passed through several groups of dark figures lying on the ground and we were quite uncertain whether they were friend or foe. They did not challenge us nor we them and we rode on in absolute silence until they were passed. Who they were we never knew. After stumbling along in the darkness for some hours about midnight we crossed the bed of a wadi which we took to be the Wadi Ghuzzeh and then halted and bivouacked till dawn. All night long mounted troops kept passing us often shouting to one another in the darkness to keep touch.

When dawn broke we found we were still about half a mile north of the main wadi and that the troops of our division were still trekking by. As soon as it was light Turkish guns began to open upon us, showing that they were closely following the rearguard which proved to be only just behind us. We were not long in saddling up and joining in the procession.

As we made our way back to Deir el Belah we began to hear what had happened. The 53rd Division, owing to their late start, had been unable to take the town. They had captured Ali Muntar and been driven off it again. Our friends the Anzac Division had got right into the town from the north but had had to come out again when the general withdrawal was ordered, though they had taken 700 prisoners, including a Turkish Divisional General caught in his carriage, trying to make his way into Gaza from the north. The Anzacs had even brought away with them several Turkish guns. It was a sad disappointment to have failed when so near success.

Our own casualties had been quite light and our field ambulances were able to bring all the wounded away with them, though it meant that the sand carts designed for two patients had to find room for four. The so-called immobile sections, the only part of the Division that had to foot it, had marched twelve miles to their position on the Beersheba road, stayed on duty there all day and marched twelve miles back during the succeeding night taking their patients with them; no mean performance for a unit with such a name.

The Division assembled on the plain near Belah and from noon till 4 p.m. bivouacked and rested around a big solitary tree, under a burning sun with a *khamzin* blowing. Then off we had to go again to take up a line of outposts on the hills about six miles east of Belah.

The casualties of our Division were only about thirty, but of the infantry, both the 53rd and 54th lost very heavily, the total number of casualties being about four thousand.

The 52nd Division did not take part in the action.

There was considerable anxiety lest the Turks, emboldened by their

successful defence and reinforced as they were, might make a counter attack on our right flank. To be prepared for this our outposts on the hills were kept on the *qui vive* for two days. During the whole of this period the *khamzin* was blowing and, tired out with our long ride and the excitement of the battle, we were most of us done up. Moreover, our Divisional Headquarters' messing arrangements had broken down. Owing to severe cutting down of numbers, the cook of our mess was left behind and our grooms did not make good substitutes. We were not sorry, therefore, to move back once more to our old quarters in the orchard at Deir el Belah and to get a respectable meal and a bathe in the sea after not having had our clothes off for five days.

A pause was inevitable before a renewal of the offensive could be undertaken. The infantry were withdrawn to the south bank of the Wadi and proceeded to entrench themselves.

The 74th Division, recently formed out of dismounted Yeomanry brigades, most of which had served in the Western Frontier Force, was on its way up and it was decided to await its arrival which would not be completed for another three weeks.

As far as we were concerned the time was chiefly spent in resting and recovering, though our brigades had to take turns in holding the line of outposts on the hills to the east of Rafa.

Medically, we devoted this time to restoring sanitary discipline which is always apt to get a bit slack during active operations, especially in the case of mounted troops, and to safeguarding our various water supplies.

Besides the fresh water on the beach there were many deep wells in and around the village of Deir el Belah, some of which were fresh enough to drink, though others were so brackish that they were only fit for watering animals.

The lake at Belah, which is of considerable area, was too salt for human consumption but could be used for watering horses and camels. One of my own ponies was a long time convincing himself that this water was fit for horses to drink.

Our Fourth Brigade, the 4th Australian Light Horse, now joined us. Another reinforcement was also coming forward which might be mentioned only with bated breath, namely a small consignment of tanks from the use of which much was hoped. The railway had been brought forward to Belah and with it had come two casualty clearing stations, the 53rd and the 54th. Gradually plans for the next operations began to mature. Our Division was again to be on the right flank, but our rôle was a very different one this time. The Turks had not failed to take advantage of the respite we were giving them. They had tremendously strengthened their position by skilful and energetic digging.

The gap in their line of defence between Gaza and Sheria through which we had ridden in the previous battle was filled up and a very strong entrenched position prepared on raised ground known as the Atawineh

Ridge, close to the point where our dressing station had been on the Gaza-Beersheba road during the first attack. It was no longer possible, therefore, to ride round the enemy's flank. This time, while the infantry was once more making a frontal attack on the southern defences of Gaza, our Division was to make a dismounted attack on the Atawineh Ridge. Our colleagues, the Anzac Division, were to remain mounted and cover our right flank.

April 19 was the day fixed for the attack. On the 16th our division moved out to Tel el Jemmi, a small flat-topped hill rising out of the bed of the Wadi Ghuzzeh about seven miles from its mouth and about two miles east of the point where we had previously crossed.

On the afternoon of the 18th I rode out with the field ambulance commanders to reconnoitre the ground in front and to select positions for advanced dressing stations for the division.

We went forward about four miles and selected a place by the side of the Wadi Sihan, a northern tributary of the Wadi Ghuzzeh, more or less out of view of the enemy's position and at a distance of about five thousand yards from it. There was a track leading down from here to Tel el Jemmi suitable for wheeled vehicles and possibly, with détours, for motor ambulances if the latter could be got across the Wadi Ghuzzeh. This was at first uncertain owing to its steep sides and sandy bottom.

In the plan for medical evacuation we arranged to have a divisional collecting dressing station at Tel el Jemmi, to form which the immobile section of the 6th Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance had been brought up.

The immobile sections of the 3rd Light Horse and 5th Mounted Brigade Field Ambulances were left near railhead to take over the sick and lightly wounded cases from the division in relief of the casualty clearing-stations there.

The main divisional dressing station was to be at Aserferiyeh, the place we had selected in the Wadi Sihan. For this operation the field ambulances were worked as divisional units under the direct orders of the A.D.M.S.

The main dressing station was to be formed by the 3rd Australian Light Horse Field Ambulance. The 5th Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance and the 4th Light Horse Field Ambulance, now working for the first time, were to form advance dressing stations in rear of their brigades. The bearer divisions of the 3rd and 4th Light Horse and the 5th Mounted were to collect wounded from their respective brigade fronts.

The 6th Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance, whose brigade was in reserve, was kept also in reserve at Divisional Headquarters about a mile behind Aserferiyeh.

It was still uncertain if the motor ambulances would be able to get up to the main dressing station, so half the sand carts were to be employed for collecting from the advanced dressing station and regimental aid posts up to the main dressing station, the remainder working between this point and the collecting station at Tel el Jemmi.

We moved out from Tel el Jemmi before dawn on the morning of the 19th, and the battle began all along the line soon after it was light.

The 52nd, 53rd and 54th Divisions were attacking Gaza with the 74th Division in reserve.

In our own attack the 5th Mounted and the 3rd and 4th Light Horse were in the firing line in this order from right to left. The brigades dismounted about three miles from the enemy's position and the horses were left hidden in the various branch wadis that intersected the ground.

The troops went forward with great dash and the Australians occupied the front line of Turkish trenches in a very short time, but a devastating machine gun fire drove them out again.

All day they made repeated but unsuccessful attempts to push on, and their casualties were very heavy.

The main dressing station was soon hard at work, and evacuation proceeded regularly and smoothly. About noon the satisfactory news was received from the officer in charge that with the help of the engineers he had managed to get the Ford motor ambulances across the wadi at Tel el Jemmi by constructing ramps down the steep banks. It was found that by making détours round the ends of the intersecting wadis leading into the Wadi Sihan they could make their way up to the main dressing station. This was an enormous help as the volume of work still continued to increase.

Fifty led horses were requisitioned from the troops to carry back lightly wounded, and later another thirty. All the transport and bearers of the 6th Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance were sent up to help early in the day.

By 4.30 p.m. nothing further had been effected, and we were warned that a retirement would have to take place at 8 p.m. It was evident that if we continued to convey the wounded the whole way from Aserferiyeh to Jemmi it would be impossible to clear the main dressing station at the former place in time.

The O.C. of the 6th Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance was therefore ordered to open a subsidiary dressing station at the village of Mendur, about two miles nearer than Jemmi. This saved the situation for us. The main dressing station was cleared by 8 p.m. and the field ambulances withdrew with the troops to a line behind Asaferiyeh. All through the night the work of dressing and clearing the wounded went on at Mendur and Jemmi. The former was cleared before morning except for fifteen cases too bad to move. The divisional collecting station at Jemmi was not completely cleared until 3.30 a.m. on the morning of the 21st.

I spent the night between Mendur and Jemmi and had an unpleasant journey from the former place to the latter, just after midnight. After crossing the Wadi Ghuzzeh at Jemmi, riding with my groom, I managed to take the wrong turning and eventually struck the Wadi Sheria, on

which Mendur lies about two miles N.E. of Mendur. By that time I had discovered my mistake, and to avoid losing my way again I decided to follow the dry bed of the wadi down to the dressing station. It ran a tortuous course and was so horribly rough that it took two good hours to reach my destination.

The responsibility for removing the cases from Jemmi was entrusted to Major Lelean, the D.A.D.M.S. of the Desert Column, who took up his position there during the operations, and controlled the Motor Ambulance Convoy. The road to the casualty clearing station at Deir el Belah was a roundabout one ten miles long. It became so cut up that a new route had to be adopted in the middle of the operations.

The total number of wounded that passed through the collecting station at Jemmi between the morning of the 19th and the early morning of the 21st was 762, of whom 414 were from our own Division and the remainder from the Anzac Division on our right or from the Infantry on our left. The staff of the station was only three officers and fifteen men who in consequence did not have much time for rest.

The Division remained at Jemmi holding a line of outposts just north of the wadi until the evening of the 22nd when we were withdrawn to Beni Selah some ten miles back on the hills east of Khan Yunus. Here we remained with one brigade thrown out to the right flank towards Shellal occupying the fortifications which as mentioned before had been so carefully prepared by the Turks after their defeat at Rafa, but which they had never held against us.

The operation had been a trying one for the transport and there had been a heavy mortality among the camels. Their dead bodies were strewn about the country forming fine breeding places for flies and rendering the whole countryside nauseous.

Our sanitary section, which during the operations had been left at Rafa, now rejoined us and to them was entrusted the Herculean task of cleaning up. Fortunately they had among their ranks an individual who was described by his commanding officer as a specialist in destroying camels. On casually inquiring what was his occupation in civil life I learned that he was Modern Language master in one of our oldest public schools. He did not belie his reputation. With a gang of Egyptian Labour Corps men, a few tins of paraffin, and some bales of chopped straw or *tibben*, he soon made the atmosphere of our area breathable once more.

The infantry attack on Gaza had been no more successful on this occasion than the last. They found the enemy strongly reinforced and the defences greatly improved. The losses were even heavier than before, reaching a total of 7,000. The only result gained was that our line was established some three miles nearer Gaza. The troops proceeded to dig themselves into a line of trenches facing those of the Turks.

Some changes took place in the Higher Command after this battle. Sir Philip Chetwode succeeded Sir Charles Dobell in command of East

Force and General Chauvel took command of Desert Column in place of General Chetwode.

On May 4 (1917) I received an intimation that I was to move over to East Force Headquarters and become Deputy Director of Medical Services of the Force.

(To be continued.)

Current Literature.

MM. DE LA PRADELLE, VONCKEN AND DEHOUSSE. *La Reconstruction Du Droit de la Guerre*. Paris. Les Editions Internationales. Pp. 147.

This publication deals generally with the origin and activities of the International Congress of Military Medicine and other international bodies with similar interests and more particularly with certain important projects for the improvement of the laws of war by the inclusion of articles dealing with subjects now considered to be insufficiently covered, or which have hitherto been omitted from the International Code.

In the period 1914-1918 it was found desirable that the medical officers of the allied armies should meet and discuss the various problems then confronting them, and, arising from these conferences, in the years that have elapsed since the end of the Great War, an international medical organization has developed. The International Congress of Military Medicine and Pharmacy met for the first time in Brussels in 1921, and on that occasion a permanent committee was formed to arrange for future meetings. In 1930 a permanent record office was established at Liège. Behind this organization is the International Assembly of the heads of Naval, Military, and Air Force Medical Services a most important body which has been responsible for drawing up the statutes governing the work of the Congress, Committee and Bureau.

Since its formation the Congress has met eight times in different European cities, and the next meeting has been arranged to take place in 1937 at Bucharest on the invitation of the government of Roumania.

While the subjects discussed at these meetings have been largely of a technical and professional nature such as the treatment and evacuation of the sick, the wounded and gassed, the training and employment of specialists and similar measures designed to increase the efficiency of military medical services employed on what may be considered their normal duties, the publication under review shows that there has been for some years a very definite tendency to widen the boundaries of discussion and to deal with questions of social hygiene, physical training and similar subjects from the civil point of view, the competence of the military medical services to