

second of these reasons decided me to concur in this change of plan almost at the eleventh hour.

The preliminary stage commenced on the night of the 30th/31st December and terminated on the night of the 7th/8th January.

During this stage all personnel except 17,000 were removed, as well as the majority of the guns and a great quantity of animals, stores, &c.

The amount of stores remaining on shore after the preliminary stage was greater than was anticipated or intended; this was almost entirely due to the unfavourable weather conditions and, as men were evacuated, to a shortage in working parties.

On 1st January the weather showed signs of breaking; on the 2nd and 3rd strong north-easterly winds blew all day; the morning of the 4th was calm, but the weather broke at 7 p.m. and by 11 p.m. it was blowing a gale from the N.E., which, however, moderated on the evening of the 5th; on the 6th and 7th the weather conditions were favourable.

Fortunately the wind remained in the north to north-east which permitted work to continue on "V" and "W" beaches. The transfer of guns, animals and stores, &c., from motor lighters to transports and supply ships lying off the beaches was a matter of great difficulty under such conditions of weather.

During the whole of this period "V" and "W" beaches were subjected to a heavy and accurate shell fire from the enemy's batteries mounted on the Asiatic shore and also from guns firing from positions to north of Achi Baba.

All these guns were accurately registered on to the beaches, and the shelling continued day and night at frequent and uncertain intervals; that the actual loss of life from this fire was very small borders on the miraculous; the beach parties were completely exposed, and piers and foreshore constantly hit by shells while officers and men were working on them; even when resting in the dug-outs security from enemy's fire could not be assured, and several casualties occurred under these conditions.

The work on the beaches was practically continuous; during the day time motor lighters, &c., were loaded up with stores, &c., to be transferred to store ships at night; by night the work was most strenuous.

During the whole time there remained the paramount necessity of preventing the enemy gaining intelligence of what was in progress; this added greatly to the difficulties of work during daylight. Enemy aircraft paid frequent visits to the peninsula; on these occasions, whilst the "Taube" was in evidence, animals and transports approaching the beaches were turned and marched in the opposite direction, and stores and horses already in lighters were even unloaded on to the beaches to give the appearance of a disembarkation.

On the afternoon of the 7th the enemy delivered a very heavy artillery attack against certain portions of our advanced position, probably the most intense bombardment our trenches in the Helles area have ever been subjected to.

Attempts were made by the enemy to follow up this bombardment by an infantry attack, but the few Turks who could be persuaded to quit their trenches were instantly shot down, and the infantry advance was a complete failure.

This bombardment and attack most fortunately took place at a time when our forward position was fully manned and when there were still about sixty guns in position on the peninsula, with a very large supply of ammunition.

The ships supporting the left flank opened a heavy fire on the Turkish position. H.M.S. "Grafton" (Captain Henry E. Grace), H.M.S. "Raglan" (Captain Cecil D. S. Raikes), and H.M. Destroyer "Wolverine" (Lieutenant-Commander Adrian St. V. Keyes), were on duty in position to support the army, which they did most ably, and undoubtedly inflicting heavy loss on the enemy. They were reinforced by H.M.S. "Russell," H.M.S. "Have-lock," and H.M. Destroyer "Scorpion."

Arrangements were also made to reinforce Helles with one brigade of infantry from Imbros, should such a step become necessary.

The principal reasons the enemy did not discover that the evacuation was taking place were, I consider:—

(a) The excellent arrangements made by the military and the beach parties to prevent the enemy noticing any change in the landscape or any undue activity on the beaches.

(b) The probable unexpected force encountered in their attack on the 7th. It appears reasonable to suppose that the enemy, having thus convinced himself that the peninsula was still held in force by us, was satisfied that no evacuation would take place for some days.

(c) The fact that on the 8th the wind was in the south and blowing on to "W" and "V" beaches, and that by 9 p.m. it had freshened so considerably as to render any evacuation a most difficult and hazardous proceeding.

The enemy were certainly deceived as to the date of our final departure from his shores, and his artillery fire on the final night of the evacuation was negligible.

The decision arrived at on the 6th to evacuate practically all the personnel of the final night from "W" and "V" beaches necessitated some rearrangement of plans, as some 5,000 additional troops had to be embarked from these beaches.

To use motor lighters from the already crowded piers would have lengthened the operation very considerably, and it was therefore decided to employ destroyers to embark 5,200 men from the blockships, which were fitted with stagings and connected to the shore; thus existing arrangements would be interfered with as little as possible. The result was excellent. The destroyers which were laid alongside the blockships, in spite of a nasty sea, being handled with great skill by their commanding officers, once more showing their powers of adaptability.

The necessary amendments to orders were issued on the morning of the 7th, and, in spite of the short notice given, the naval operations on the night of the 8th/9th were carried out without confusion or delay, a fact which reflects great credit on all concerned, especially on the beach personnel, who were chiefly affected by the change of plan.

On the 8th January the weather was favourable except that the wind was from the south; this showed no signs of freshening at 5 p.m., and orders were given to carry out the final stage.

The actual embarkation on the 8th com-