

Nov 26th.

Fine day until 5 pm when it started to rain heavily, soon developing into a regular tropical downpour. Water stood 2 feet deep in the trenches after 1 hour's rain. A tremendous flood of water poured into our trenches from the hills behind the Turks, washing away our barricade completely and drowning several men. A mule, a pony and 3 dead Turks were actually brought into our trench by the water. In the space of about 2 minutes our entire section was converted into a regular lake, communication trenches being transformed into swirling streams of muddy water. The entire ground between us and the main communication trench became to all intents a river. All that could be seen above water was an occasional tree and a few banks of mud where the parapet or paradoss had been particularly high.

All the battalion with the exception of about 6 or 8 men who were drowned in the first rush of water had managed to scramble out of the submerged trenches and were standing about on the pieces of ground remaining above water, soaked to the skin and the majority without overcoats or rifles as the flood had come so suddenly that they had been unable to get them out with them. The flood reached its zenith about 9 p.m. when the trenches were full and the intervening terrain about 1 foot deep in water and mud.

The moon came out and lit up the scene – a waste of water with clusters of men standing about on little banks in an even worse state than we were. At a rough estimate 50% of the battalion had rescued their rifles and about the same number their overcoats. One telephone was rescued and the signallers succeeded in getting through to Bde, whence came orders to hold on to the line at all costs, where practicable and to dig in as well as possible.

In the meantime two orderlies (Pte Frost & James) made their way to the Bde with a message having to swim a part of the way. CO went up to the firing line and Adjutant to the Munster Fusiliers and Lancs Fusiliers to tell them to hang on. It was necessary to take a plank to cross the trenches. About 10 p.m. the water started to go down slightly and as soon as it was possible the men started to throw up breastworks of mud as cover, working with anything which came to hand which was practically nothing but their hands. A bitter North wind got up, gradually increasing in violence.

Nov 27th.

The water subsided slowly all night until by morning it stood about 4 or 5 feet in the trenches and the intervening ground was nearly a foot deep in thick mud and clay. By daylight moderate cover from shrapnel had been made. A few rifles were retrieved and a few raincoats. Rations of bully beef and biscuits were brought up with great difficulty owing to the muddy ground. A certain amount of rum [?] was brought up. A cheerless dawn with a grey sky and a bitterly cold wind disclosed low lines of breastworks with men huddled shivering behind them.

An attempt was made to clean rifles but with only moderate success. Anyone who walked about after daylight ran a good risk of being sniped. Capt Shaw, Lt Ormesher and 2 Lt Fenall [sp?] were hit by snipers. The former being killed and Lt Ormesher as it turned out later mortally wounded. Two or three men were also hit. There was a good deal of shrapnel fired during the day, chiefly at men who were struggling back to ambulances or going backwards and forwards with messages or for other reasons. Of the men who went back to hospital several died on the way from exposure and exhaustion.

Several Turks were accounted for as they left their trenches and some tried to surrender, nearly all failing to do so because of the state of the ground. The GOC Division came up at midday and ordered Dublin Castle to be held at all costs and the entire line where practicable. The wind got up steadily all day and eventually became a tearing/searing [?] gale, intensely cold and with scudding [?] snow. Sniping seemed to cease in the afternoon by mutual consent. A large number of men were forced to go back during the day from sheer exhaustion and cold. By evening very few were left in the reserve line. The GSO III 29th Division came up at dusk with a bottle of whisky and three or four men actually succeeded in bringing up a certain amount of rum (sic) of which some was successful in getting to the [illegible...survivors?] in the firing line, although some never reached its destination.

Nov 28th.

The wind got colder and the snow thicker during the early hours of the morning. About 2 a.m. an order came through from Bde to send back all the men to the Ambulance who would be unable to fire a rifle next day. Accordingly a certain number from each company were sent back, of which a few never reached the Ambulance. About 4 a.m. the CO and Adjutant were the only survivors in the reserve line and decided that not 50 men could live through the next day.

Accordingly they went back to the Bde and the CO got permission to bring back the battalion to the Bde nullah which was higher ground and was also sheltered. They then went back to the firing line and ordered the battalion of which there were about 300 left to come back. This was accomplished with difficulty as hardly a man was able to walk properly, and the going was very bad indeed with three trenches to cross, each by means of a narrow plank. Very few men were able to do more than get back themselves let alone help others. A few were shot leaving the line and a few failed to get back at all or had to be kicked into some semblance of life.

There was no shelling as the blizzard was too thick for the Turkish gunners to see what was happening. A small party was left at the Regimental dump in a fairly dry dugout as a sort of guard. The whole battalion was back in the nullah by 7 pm where they were given warm food, blankets and 150 sheets of corrugated iron. The majority were taken to hospital during the day [mostly?] with exposure or frostbite. 2 Lt Camies went to Dublin Castle to hold it until the next evening with 12 men.

Nov 29th.

A very cold day – freezing hard and a bitter wind but no snow. Many men were sent down to Ambulances. 350 men had returned to [the] nullah but the strength of the Battalion as about 4 p.m. was 105 men (of which 31 had been sent back from Ambulances in a state of semi-collapse) and 11 Officers. Hard work all day for the doctor who had himself collapsed for a few hours during the last 24.

Nov 30th.

The party from another Regiment which were supposed to have relieved 2 Lt Camies at dusk on the previous evening lost their way. 2 Lt Camies was discovered at 4 a.m. unrelieved with nearly all his men in a helpless condition. Sgt Major Paschall was sent up to take relieving party to Dublin Castle and to bring the other party back which he succeeded in doing. 2 Lt Camies and entire party went sick. Cold frosty day. No wind. Several men went away with frost bite – some with boat tickets who preferred to stay. 4 p.m. roll call showed 10 officers and 84 men, of which 70 effective. The Battalion went out by night to search the ground and brought back 150 rifles, several sets of equipment etc.

Dec 1st. At an inspection of the 9th Army Corps Commander the strength of the Battalion was shown as follows:

Company.....	Strength.....	Effectives
W Coy.....	3.....	2
X Coy	12.....	7
Y Coy.....	10.....	6
Z Coy.....	19.....	7
HQ Coy.....	26.....	16
MG Section.....	14.....	4
Total.....	82.....	42