

6.

Particulars of
Brian's Natl.
in a letter to Jack from his father.

Gray Station Watnonga

Sunday 19th Oct 1914

My dear Jack

I do so hope you are getting this rain. I don't like telling you for it will make you cross, but up till 6 o'clock tonight we have had over 6 inches here and in the morning and during a gale nice weather for the troops to go aboard. Last week I saw the officer whose hand Brian amputated (Police Master Maudsley) at the Victoria Barracks Hospital. Meyer & von Kennedy 2 German officers who were in the fight called on me; also a sailor from the "Yarra" bringing Brian's belt of which you know I have spoken to the Herald's correspondent who returned in the "Beronia", and I have been on board the "Beronia" and seen 2 of the officers who the hospital to which Brian was brought and the isolation ward in which the dear old chap breathed his last. I send you a rough sketch copied from one Meyer drew for me which will help to explain matters. At "1" Maudsley was shot in the hand while manoeuvring. At "2" Brian operated. At "3" Brian Maudsley and Meyer who was a prisoner were standing, and Maudsley was being helped by a sailor to a place of shelter. They asked where the red cross flag was. Brian said he had it. Meyer and Maudsley were annoyed. It is not safe to land the prisoners to the rear without a flag" said Meyer. "The natives will not go for us on the flag. They have had it drilled into them that it is "taboo"

I saw no flag and Main had well fire the man very bravely
which he proceeded to do. The sailors protesting but finally took it
and fired it round his cap. At the moment word was
passed along to Main that a man was wounded at the
mast. They said it was intended to go without a flag in
the firing was very heavy across the gun but Main had to
know. How he went, and they did not see him again
till some hours later at the wharf when he said Main was
unconscious and apparently dying. He must have received
a serious wound. What he could have received, I am told
you could have put your hand into the wound. Main got
to his man safely, and after fixing him up as best he could
the message came that there was another man wounded
at the front "I must go to him" said Main. "No! it is
too dangerous" said Bowen who was with him. "I cannot
sanction it." "I must go" said Main. "I cannot let a
wounded man be unattended." "No!" said Bowen. "I
cannot send any man with you." "Then I will go alone"
said Main. Finally Bowen yielded to his pleading, let
him go and sent 3 men with him. Main got to his man
and was stooping over him attending to him when he
was shot in the abdomen. He has heard very little of
what happened afterwards. Strange that some of those who
were with him after he fell have written us as if they had
the letter had gone astray. That is the more probable. The
Herald correspondent tells me that McQuinn, Lemaire
Henderson the three authors for her was with him. I have
written to all of them asking for any particulars they
can give me. The sailor from the "Yarn" brought me
Main's belt to my room. The story was that when the
ship heard that the landing party was engaged a

² sleep party was put off and so hurriedly that they
hadn't time to arm or even to dress they picked up
axes, hammers, hicks anything they could find
When seen the firing the sailor who had been holding
his trousers up with his hands saw a ~~the~~ belt lying in
the track and a few yards off on the bank a man
lying wounded with ~~the~~ two or three standing by. He
picked up the belt and hurried on and when he got
back to the ship on the afternoon I saw Prains, some said
The wounded man must have been Prains. They probably
cut off the belt to get at the wound. It was not marked in
any way.

The sailor told me with burning indignation the Herald
Correspondent wrote that Prains who ~~was~~ ^{permanently}
led the landing party was an aviator and
skipped at the war and was seen within 2 miles of
the firing and that when the German surrendered
(the immediate spot) they had to march the officer in charge
2 miles to the war to find Prains. The Herald man
said his private friend was a matter of common
knowledge and that he heard the same Crown
arrived when at Rabaul when there was some false
alarm. One doesn't associate the name of Prains
with Corcoran.

It appears that Prains was incriminated through there being
no doubt as to the red cross flag, a piece of evidence
was in saying criminal negligence, and that there should
be an inquiry, into the matter and also to to Why 10
for all a fine was paid when Holman wanted to send 750

Poor old man insisted on coming into my room to see
the sailor man, and took possession of the bed and
covered on it. His bed for her to seek to know my
detail but I suppose it is natural.

The doctor of the Beronia (Sheet) is coming to see me
tomorrow. I hear he was with Brian at the last &
he the visits in evening in to see him also. I will
hear more to add a post script in case he has anything
fresh to tell me

I am much better Sunday. I have a good deal
of pain but on the whole am better

Mr B has been out today just got back. The weekly course
was good for my dinner and tea ready for me

Love from
Dad

P.P. Sheet called this morning together with two others, after they
had gone Colonel House P.M.S. on the Beronia" called immediately
Sheet and as two or three people that he intended at Brian being
sent; said for (Sheet) was the man who should have gone House
told me that it was a question as to whether Brian or Donaldson
should be sent. They both wanted to go but Brian's injury was
his "right" as he was "Donaldson junior by 3 days" House
recognizes his right. House, himself a V.C. man, said
Brian deserved the V.C. for what he did. I am sure a noble
fellow and my hero, and a devoted "that he told him
he told me that when he spoke to Brian on the ship Brian
said "Spine! Spine!" House said "horse" but Brian
knew, I was his spine. I had a letter from the Navy Dept
today giving me official particulars. It spoke of being pulled
around and said that the wound was in the abdomen
and spine. He was buried in his uniform. House is off to
Europe with the expeditionary force