

Ashmead-bartlett



Ashmead-Bartlett was basically a war correspondent (Baillie). On the 3rd September, , 1915, he decided to send a telegraph to the Daily Telegraph, which was stationed in London. His report gave a lot of information with regard to massive attacks in the course of the Gallipoli campaign. The unfortunate thing is that there were a number of erasures that were carried out as a result of the military censorships. Apart from Ashmead-Bartlett, other war correspondents also went through the same challenges (Murdoch 39-50).

Murdock's Arrival and His Association with Ashmead-Bartlett

One of the most fundamental occurrences was the involvement of Keith Murdoch, the father of the media mogul, Rupert Murdoch, in the war time correspondence. On joining the correspondence, he exhibited a lot of determination which eventually gave the protests a hearing. Keith Murdoch had previously lost his job following his reporting of the bungled Gallipoli war. In essence, this kind of action was the indication that the military as well as the politicians felt that the correspondents were interfering with the war.

By the time of his entry into the war correspondence, Murdock was merely a twenty-nine year old lad, who had come to London in August 1915. He was to represent a group of newspapers from Australia. He was to have a stop in the city of Cairo while going to London. His mission was to send reports on the postal arrangements for the troops from Australia (Murdoch 39-50). His anxiety about going to the battlefield was not any lesser. He asked for permission from the General Sir Ian Hamilton commanding a diverse force

that landed at Gallipoli in April of the same year. The objective of the expedition was to launch an attack on Constantinople as well as get Turkey out of the First World War (Shrier).

However, Hamilton was very much reluctant to let Murdoch go. This is mainly due to the fact that all was not well on the battle front. In many ways, the British troops as well as the Anzac troops, made up of New Zealand and Australian Corps, were restricted into some horrible areas of the beach. These areas were experienced permanent shellfire.

In a rather regrettable instance, Hamilton had the intention of having Murdoch sign a declaration that would ensure that Murdoch did not in any way correspond by any other channels apart from those authorized by the military officials. According to the declaration, Murdoch was not supposed to pass any confidential military information to anyone, without being submitted first by the Chief Field Censor (Hamilton).

In the meantime, Murdoch made some visits to the Anzac bridge where he declined Hamilton's offer for a lift to visit all the war scenes. After that Murdoch traveled back to the GHQ, which was situated on Imbros. Murdoch apparently bumped into a group of correspondents of war. These included G. Ward Price from the Daily Mail, Charles Bean, the Australian war correspondent, as well as Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett from the Daily Telegraph.

Of all these individuals, Ashmead-Bartlett was the most significant due to his past experience in covering the Russo-Japanese War. His competence in the field of war correspondence was without doubt. He seemed to have the account for unlimited expenses and was thus able to use a huge part of it in

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offering the navy officers some liquor, who would in turn divulge relevant information with regard to the happenings on the war front.

One of the Imbros sights was the Greek porters regular line that staggered to the camps loaded with some supplies for Ashmead-Bartlett. He showed hatred to the restraints GHQ imposed upon him, especially those imposed by Captain William Maxwell, the Censor. Since the first landings he had been fighting a battle when trying to inform the public of Great Britain on the occurrences on the war front.

On several occasions, Maxwell, under the direct instructions from Sir Ian Hamilton, was harsh on any of the critics of the operation. He would provide no reason for the setbacks as well as delays that would be the order of the day. In addition to this, in case of the increase of casualties, he would not provide any report about it. The figures were largely unknown to the press.

Furthermore, Captain Maxwell could not let Ashmead-Bartlett access any of his messages being transmitted until when they had undergone censorship. Additionally, the cables by Hamilton must have reached London before the release. During the time that there was huge interest in the French warfare, dispatches by Ashmead-Bartlett's on the Gallipoli War would arrive several days later after a heavy censorship exercise. As a result, dispatches by Ashmead-Bartlett would fail to appear anywhere on the printed press (Murdoch 39-50).

Consequently, Ashmead-Bartlett became skeptical and hostile. At some point, Australians almost killed him believing he was an English-speaking spy from Turkey. They even arrested him at one time. However, Ashmead-

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Bartlett became unpopular while being among the officers at the GHQ. This was mainly due his predictions of a looming disaster.

The arrival of Murdoch was a great relief to Ashmead-Bartlett since he told him of the difficulties involved in accessing information regarding the war, as well as describing the campaign in gloom. However, Murdoch managed to convince him of the momentous imminent disaster by winter. This was to take place unless the people of Britain and the government heard the truth about the happenings on the war front. Murdoch was well aware that such credible information, which he had gathered was a recipe for a big story of the war.

For the sake of getting the information out to the public, the pair had to disregard the war correspondence regulations. Their objective was to dispatch some uncensored information to Britain. In this regard, Ashmead-Bartlett drafted a letter to Asquith, the British Prime Minister, with Murdoch being charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the letter got to the right hands.

Later, details were emerged from the telegram indicating that the military censorship had expunged the names of some of the brigades who had been identified in the report. As a result, " the 87th" brigade was changed to " one" brigade, " the 86th" replaced with " another brigade" and " a third brigade" was indicated as the 88th. This was meant to disenfranchise the enemy camp and, thus, halt the enemy from accessing the new strategies launched by the actual troops. This worked and improved on the strength of the Allied presence at Gallipoli.

The moment that Murdoch left with the dispatch he only managed to get as far as Marseilles. This was because of his detention by a British Officer, together with his escort. The British officer would not allow him to leave; he put him under custody unless and until he handed over the letter. A Guardian correspondent, named Nevinson, revealed the details to Hamilton, thus betraying him. This is a clear indication that some of the war correspondence would spy on other war correspondents and inform the authorities (Shrier). It could be that some perceivable rivalry among the war correspondents might have been the major cause for the military's long lasting and successful censorship.

Murdoch's detention, as well as the information from Sir Hamilton and his men had over the letter being smuggled by Murdoch, saw the revocation of Ashmead-Bartlett's official recognition. The orders were for him to go back to London, signifying the end of Ashmead-Bartlett's career in Gallipoli. On his arrival in London on September 23, 1915, Murdoch shared a room with the Australian High Commissioner at the headquarters. As a result, he got an opportunity to divulge information on the dispatch of Ashmead-Bartlett. He also discussed his conversation with Ashmead-Bartlett. Murdoch presented the Gallipoli war accounts in the letter form that was addressed to Andrew Fisher, the Australian Prime Minister.

The presentation involved strong journalistic overtones. The serialization of the data was in a sharp and the eye-catching way. Murdoch employed the use of a strong mixture of exaggerations, facts, prejudice, errors and one of the most emotional forms of nationalism to accentuate the extraordinary nature of the document. This information resulted in high flying and

damaging concerns against the British general staff as well as their leader, Hamilton. However, it emerged that most of the writings were untrue (Shrier).

The bases of these charges were founded on the fact that the Gallipoli excursion was in serious threat of catastrophe. However, this proved to be correct in the end of it at all. The actions by Murdoch, although questionable, had a resounding consequence on how Sir Hamilton would lead the army from then henceforth.