

# **RUSSIAN SOLDIER IN GRAFTON**

## **CORPORAL KLESHENKO'S EXPERI- ENCES.**

Corporal Joseph Kleshenko is a young Russian soldier, who two years ago left his native land and came to Australia. He had been here little more than a year when the war broke out, and immediately offered his services. Not being a British subject, the authorities stated they could not accept him. He then communicated with the Russian Consul in Melbourne, who promptly cabled the facts to Petrograd and received word back that the Governments of both England and Russia had agreed to the enlistment with the Commonwealth Forces of those Russian reservists who were then in Australia. The corporal was thereupon admitted to the Sixth Light Horse under Colonel Cox, and went into camp at Holdsworthy, where he remained for three weeks, leaving on December 18 for Egypt. He arrived there a month later, and proceeded to Malta, where, as he puts it, "we had six months' physical hard training."

Corporal Kleshenko, with the Sixth and Seventh Light Horse, was eventually ordered to Gallipoli, and effected a landing at Gaba Tepe at midnight on April 27. They charged the Turks with fixed bayonets, and fought till 4 o'clock in the morning. The fighting was terrific, the enemy being three to one.

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**“I had been thoroughly trained in the use of the bayonet in the army of my own country, and had a big pull over the Turks. I got the first one in the neck and threw him back, no more anyone to trouble. I accounted for three before I got this” (showing a scar on the back of the right hand, through which a bayonet had been driven.)**

**He was taken to Malta for treatment, but was able to return to the firing line in three weeks. After a day and a half in trenches he received three bullet wounds in the right leg, these necessitating eight weeks' treatment in the military hospital at Alexandria. He was given the choice of a trip to Australia or some other part. He selected Australia.**

**Speaking of the progress being made in Gallipoli, the corporal said that at the time he was injured on the second occasion he was two and a half miles inland. He does not think much progress is possible until the Allies there now are reinforced. He had no time, he said, for the men with cold feet—they should not be asked, they should be sent.**

**“Anyone should be glad to fight for a country like Australia. In none can a soldier be treated fairer—well paid, well clad, and well looked after by kind people. It is the freest country in the world, and everyone should rise up and fight for it. I go back to fight with your soldiers—brave men, good fighters, good comrades, like a joke—as soon as this leg gets right. Single and married men all go in my country. Someone does not come to you and say, ‘Will you join the colours?’ Nothing so gentle. It is done like this. When war breaks out, officers are sent**

COLONEL ...  
this: When war breaks out, officers are sent with speed all over the country. They have to get the men to a certain spot by a certain time. It may be dead of night. A knock at the door and a brusque intimation to catch such and such a train at such and such a time. Fifteen minutes is given, and all take care to do it. Neglect to obey promptly means that you will be shot. In this way a million and a half have joined their reserves, and within 36 hours were on their way to meet the Germans. That is the way we do it in Russia, and I hope to see Australia learn a little from this example of promptitude and thoroughness."

Corporal Kleshenko did not think that Australia, with five million people, had done nearly enough. "At least 400,000 soldiers should be sent. If that is done, the Turk will be knocked clean off the face of the earth. He is in great strength in the Dardanelles, and can be beaten only by greater numbers. There is no fairness in 30,000 men being asked to beat 60,000 trained and entrenched men. Let everyone go, and the Turkish army will be wiped right out."

Russia, in this war, added the corporal, had lost over five million men in killed and wounded. She has, however, a trained army of twelve million more in the battlefield, and can put 20,000,000 there. Not old men, either, like the Germans. The trouble is lack of ammunition and heavy guns. These needs are being supplied by Japan, and the enemy within the next two years will be crushed to powder. With an army of 1,600,000 now massed at Odessa and ready for transport, the young soldier anticipates that Bulgaria will be like a nut and thrown into

the young soldier and his comrades  
will be crushed like a nut and thrown into  
the Black Sea. Altogether, he is hopeful of  
seeing the utter rout of the enemy, who will,  
he tells us, be ignominiously defeated.

Corporal Kleshenko had a brother killed in  
the Wyskow Pass (Carpathians), and another  
in the Lodz district during the fighting last  
year. He expects to return to the front him-  
self after Christmas.

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