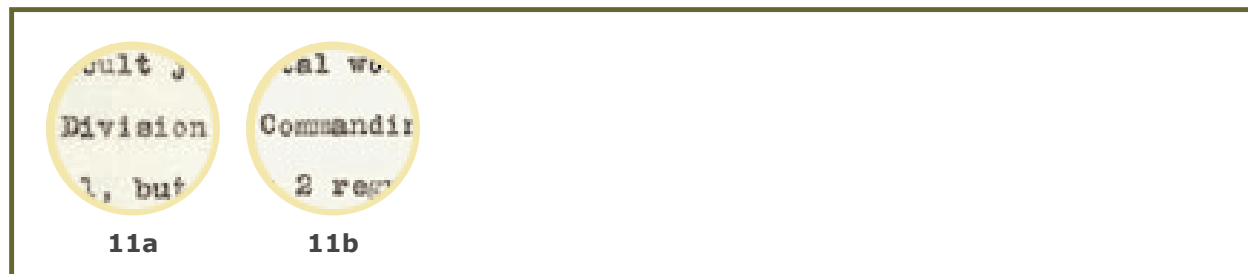




Source 11

Extracts from a letter by General Sir Henry de Beauvoir de Lisle to General Sir Henry Wilson, August 1915

(Catalogue ref: WO 106/707)



How to use this source:

Study this source carefully. It contains information that could be useful in your presentation. As you study the source, ask yourself:

- What problems does the writer describe?
- Does he blame anyone for the problems?
- Have the senior officers suffered casualties?
- Do you get the impression that the senior officers are doing well in this campaign?
- Will you use this source in your presentation?



Source 11a

On August 15th I received a telegram to proceed from Cape Helles to Suvla Bay to command, as a temporary measure, the 9th Corps, and had to start in half an hour. On the way I called at G.H.Q. and got the situation and then went on to take on the most difficult job ever yet set me. In seniority I was junior to the 4 Division Commanders one of whom was a Lieutenant General, but this was the least of my difficulties. Though I am not prepared to blame anybody the general confusion was at first sight hopeless, and in spite of the necessity to push as soon as possible I had to report that any attack before the 20th was not possible. Divisions were mixed up; water

had not been searched for, no roads or even tracks existed, communications were unsatisfactory and the state of several formations was such that they could not be relied upon. All Division Commanders refused to carry on under a junior officer, another resigned not feeling competent to straighten out his own tangle, a third has since been replaced, and of the 4, only Inglefield remains. He is excellent and though fat and wheezy is doing good work.

Brigadiers were equally hopeless. All resigned feeling too old, another was invalided, a third was removed by G.H.Q., two were casualties. In the first few days therefore 8 Generals were non-effective. Fortunately the Staffs were excellent and quickly re-organized, carrying out orders well.



Source 11b

This is a very severe campaign on all ranks and especially on senior officers. Old men are no use. They collapse at once. Nothing I saw in France, even the Retreat a year ago, is equal to the physical and mental strain of this work, and the number of senior officers who get invalided is the best proof. In my own Division I have lost 2 out of 3 Br. Generals invalided and a large proportion of Commanding Officers. Some come back but even then they are no use. The cause is not entirely mental, though no doubt mental worry produces physical collapse. I admit that Regimental Commanding Officers have a bad time. Few Regiments have more than 2 regular officers left and

though the others are excellent material it means heavy work for the Regimental staff to keep things up to standard. Wounded officers are now beginning to return, and they will relieve the pressure considerably.