

Editors' Preface

“With the possible exception of the Crimean War, the Gallipoli expedition was the most poorly mounted and ineptly controlled operation of modern British military history.”¹ Given such a conclusion, and the fact that the campaign was but a minor part of the First World War as a whole, it seems pertinent to provide a synopsis of the campaign for English-speaking readers who may not be familiar with it.

In late September 1914, almost two months after the outbreak of the First World War in Europe, the ostensibly neutral Ottoman Empire closed the Dardanelles to naval traffic, severing the vital Anglo-French communications link with Russia. Turkey then entered the war four weeks later with a bombardment of several Russian Black Sea ports, causing first Russia, then Britain and France, to declare war on her in early November. An Allied naval bombardment of the Dardanelles later the same month caused the Turks to immediately strengthen their defenses there. The strategic necessity of Allied communication with Russia through the Dardanelles, along with the tempting presence of the Ottoman capital, Constantinople, at the Bosphorus end of the waterway, led to Anglo-French naval attempts to force the straits in February and March 1915, with the aim of keeping Russia in the war while knocking Turkey out. But again, the attempts failed. In late March, Britain decided upon an amphibious invasion of the Gallipoli peninsula to capture the fortifications that had defeated the naval assaults. The preparations for landings by 80,000 men was impossible to keep secret, and the alerted Turks continued to build up their Aegean coastal defenses, including at Gallipoli.

On 25 April 1915, British forces landed at the tip of the Gallipoli peninsula, Cape Helles, while the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) landed further north at Ariburnu (or Gaba Tepe; now Anzac Cove) where they were opposed by Turkish defenders commanded by Mustafa Kemal (who would go on to become post-war Turkey's founding president Kemal Atatürk). French troops made a temporary diversionary landing at Kumkale on the Asiatic shore of the Dardanelles, while two further diversionary demonstrations were made at Besik (now Beşige) Bay also on the Asiatic shore, and at Bulair, the neck of the peninsula. The landings were successful, although strongly opposed, but the Allied forces were unable to break out from their beachheads, let alone link up or capture their objectives: the Turkish fortifications on the eastern side of the peninsula. Counterattacks by the Turks proved just as costly, and failed to push the Allies back into the sea. Allied reinforcements were continually landed, expanding the attacking nationalities to include Gurkhas, Indians and even a unit of Russian-Jewish emigres to Palestine; and the Turks likewise constantly reinforced their own forces.

On 6 August, a third, British, beachhead was established at Suvla Bay, in an attempt to support a breakout from the ANZAC beachhead five miles

¹ R. Ernest Dupuy & Trevor N. Dupuy, *Harper Encyclopedia of Military History*, 4th ed., (New York: Harper Collins, 1993), p. 1046.

to the south, but this too, failed to meet its objectives. Further reinforcements included a regiment from Newfoundland (a colony which did not become part of Canada until 1949).

Lord Kitchener visited Gallipoli in November and his recommendation that the expedition be evacuated was adopted by the British cabinet in December. Ironically, the most secretive and successful part of the Allied campaign was the withdrawal: the Anzac and Suvla beachheads were evacuated silently before dawn on 20 December, and that at Cape Helles in early January. In both cases casualties were insignificant.

Total casualty figures on both sides are disputed. The New Zealand government² claims that there were more than 140,000 Allied and 251,000 Turkish casualties.³ Australian historian Chris Coulthard-Clark gives Allied casualties of 180,000 out of 480,000 men committed over the eight-month campaign, while the Turks, whose records are less complete, lost 220,000.⁴ Dupuy and Dupuy⁵ give figures of 252,000 Allied and 251,000 Turkish casualties, of which latter 21,000 died of disease.

Despite the greater Turkish casualties, the campaign was indisputably a humiliating and costly failure for the Allies; but out of the military disaster emerged a mutual respect between the Turks and the Anzac troops in particular. Since 1916, 25 April has been commemorated in Australia and New Zealand as Anzac Day, a solemn public holiday second only to Easter and Christmas in cultural importance. In every city and town in Australia and New Zealand the day is marked by veterans and their descendants, including those of allied nations, from all the two nation's wars, marching to the local war memorial or cenotaph at dawn, both to thank the servicemen and women for their service and sacrifice in preserving our freedoms, and to contemplate the human cost of war. For several decades, Turkish veterans and their descendants have been allowed to march too, possibly the world's only national commemoration of war dead that welcomingly includes a victorious enemy of living memory. A similar dawn service is held each year at Gallipoli itself. Additionally, in the 1980s, Turkey officially renamed Arıburnu as Anzac Cove, while Australia and New Zealand each erected memorials in their respective capital cities to Kemal Atatürk and the heroism and sacrifice of Gallipoli soldiers on both sides. The Atatürk monument in Canberra is situated directly opposite the Australian War Memorial museum on Anzac Parade, one of the major axes of the city; that in Wellington is above Tarakena Bay, a site chosen for its remarkable similarity to the landscape of Gallipoli.

In his book, Major-General Ülkekul traces the strategic importance and cartographic history of Gallipoli and the Dardanelles back to antiquity, as a precursor to discussion of the maps made by both sides in preparation

² New Zealand history website, Research and Publishing Group. Ministry for Culture and Heritage <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/media/interactive/gallipoli-casualties-country>

³ The Allied breakdown is given as 73,000 British (including 21,000 dead); 28,000 Australians (8,700 dead); 27,000 French (10,000 dead); 8,000 New Zealanders (2,800 dead); 5,000 Indians (1,350 dead); and 142 Newfoundlanders (49 dead); of the Turks, 87,000 died.

⁴ Chris Coulthard-Clark, *Where Australians Fought: The Encyclopaedia of Australia's Battles*, (St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1999), pp. 101-103.

⁵ Dupuy & Dupuy, *op. cit.*, p. 1046.

for, during, and afterwards to retrospectively record and commemorate the campaign. Due to the Allied military debacle, there is a vast English-language literature on the campaign that seeks to pinpoint where, or on whom, the blame for the Allied defeat should lie. From the beginning, a lack of accurate and up-to-date maps and terrain intelligence was cited, even by the command staff, as a significant factor, but recent research has dispelled this claim.⁶ It was less a lack of cartographic and textual terrain information, than a failure to properly analyze, distribute and utilize the plentiful information that the British War Office and Intelligence Section already held. Admittedly, the British had not managed to obtain copies of the latest large-scale Turkish mapping, but the 1:63,360 maps they did have were perfectly suitable for a rapid overland campaign to capture the Turkish coastal guns defending the Dardanelles. What went wrong was the inept planning and the divided army and navy commands, which led to an almost complete loss of surprise. This, together with the defensive advantages of the terrain, enabled the Turks to contain the invaders within the initial beachheads. The Allied maps, perfectly adequate for a mobile expedition, were completely inadequate for the static trench warfare that developed. Major-General Ülkekul describes how the Allies used chance captures of individual Turkish maps to improve their own. Likewise, he shows that the Turks were well aware of the poorer quality Allied mapping, again through captured maps.

The stories of individual maps, and the glimpses he provides of the men who made, owned, captured and used them, adds a human element to the many maps illustrated in color in their entirety in the book, and many of which, particularly the Turkish maps, will not have been seen previously by English-language readers.

Given the importance of Gallipoli in the national consciousness of Australians and New Zealanders in particular, I would like to offer my thanks to Kent Lee of East View Information Services for arranging the translation of this book into English, to author Major-General Ülkekul for agreeing to modify the original Turkish text to ensure the translation was accessible to an English-speaking audience not necessarily familiar with Turkish history and culture, and to translator Osman Alp and production coordinator Ana K. Niedermaier for their hard work to ensure a quality production. Major-General Ülkekul's research deserves an international audience, not only as a study of the cartographic history of Gallipoli, and an illustration of the artistic beauty of the maps produced from the ugliness of war, but also for his belief as a true son of Atatürk that former enemies can, and should, become not simply friends but brothers, so that past hate can be turned to fraternal love. Our present world needs more such believers.

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June 2017

⁶ Peter Chasseaud & Peter Doyle, *Grasping Gallipoli: Terrain, Maps and Failure at the Dardanelles, 1915*, (Staplehurst, Kent: Spellmount, 2005).