

Unsuccessful Allied attempt to eliminate the Ottoman Empire from the war

ANZAC forces in the Dardanelles

GALLIPOLI 1915-1916

Geopolitical Situation

At the end of 1914, the Western Front had taken the shape of trench warfare. The Russian offensive in the east had collapsed. The Russian Tsarist army had suffered serious defeats in the conflict with Germany. This was not compensated for by Russian victories over Austria-Hungary.

The Western powers were unable to supply any real military support from Russia by land. This was possible only by sea, but the Germans blocked the Baltic routes, and their Turkish allies had closed the Black Sea straits (Bosphorus and Dardanelles). For Russia, this road was of great economic importance – almost all Russian exports and imports took place through the Black Sea Straits.

The opening of the front in the area of the straits was mainly to unblock this route and open Russia to Western supplies and open the way for the Allies to capture the capital of the Turkish Ottoman Empire, Constantinople, and eliminate this country from the war.

The Allied countries hoped that after the Turkish Empire, Germany would be forced to have to engage significant numbers of their forces to Eastern Europe, weakening their forces significantly on the Western Front.



Russian propaganda poster "Victory" – shows allegorical woman figures as Russia, France and Great Britain



The First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill, was an avid supporter and chief architect of the plan to create a second front. He believed that the operation in the Dardanelles would quickly tip the tide of war in favor of the Allied countries.

The price to be paid in taking Gallipoli would no doubt be heavy," he wrote, "but there would be no more war with Turkey. A good army of 50,000 and sea-power—that is the end of the Turkish menace.

—Winston Churchill

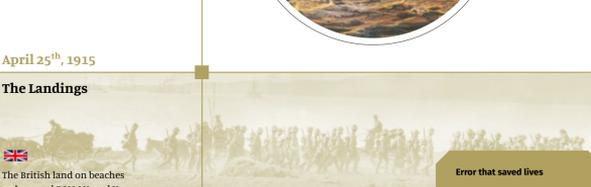
ALLIES/ENTENTE THE CENTRAL POWERS

Great Britain
France
Russia

Germany
Austria-Hungary
Italy
Bulgary
Turkey

The price to be paid in taking Gallipoli would no doubt be heavy," he wrote, "but there would be no more war with Turkey. A good army of 50,000 and sea-power—that is the end of the Turkish menace

Before the Battle – Balance of Forces



Gen. William R. Birdwood (1853-1951) – Commander of ANZAC, the joint Australian-New Zealand Corps

Marshal Otto Liman von Sanders (1855-1929) – head of the German military mission supporting the Turks

Genlan Hamilton (1863-1947) – Commander of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Forces, the section of the British army set aside to open the new Turkish front

Gen. Charles Monro (1866-1929) – succeeded Gen. Ian Hamilton as commander in chief

Lieutenant Colonel/Colonel Mustafa Kemal (1881-1938) – the hero of the Battle of Gallipoli, whose tactics turned out to be decisive in its course.

The Battle of Gallipoli was the largest landing operation of WWI.

The Battle – Course of Events, Turning Points

Already at the beginning of November 1914, four British and French ships had shelled the Turkish coastal fortifications. Fort Sedd el Bahr had been hit, with its defensive guns destroyed and 86 Turkish soldiers killed. On December 13th, 1914, a British submarine entered the straits and torpedoed the Turkish ship Mesudiye. These attacks sensitized the Turks to the weakness of their fortifications. The uncoordinated actions of the Allied fleet gave the Turks enough time to regroup their forces and establish new minefields.

February 19th, 1915
Another shelling by the Anglo-French fleet of the Turkish fortifications blocking the Dardanelles ends without success.

February 25th, 1915
An attack by the allied fleet neutralizes some of the external fortifications of the Dardanelles, but at the cost of serious damages to three battleships.

March 18th, 1915
British-French naval operations fail. Of the 18 ships involved in the operation, 7 were sunk or seriously damaged.

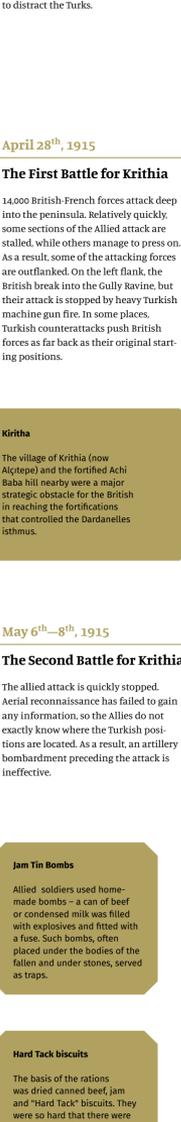
February 26th – March 17th, 1915
Unsuccessful attempts by the Allies to force their way through the minefields in the Dardanelles Strait.



The French battleship Bouvet sank within minutes. 600 sailors went down with the ship.

The Landings

The British land on beaches codenamed S, V, W, X, and Y.



ANZAC War Hero: Colonel John Monash
As a commander, Monash became famous for his efficient command, bold decisions and organizational skills. One British historian called him "the only general of creative originality produced by the First World War." The valley where the 4th Brigade led by Monash fought was called Monash Valley



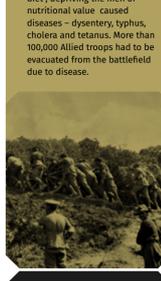
Error that saved lives
The ANZAC forces were to land on the wide Gaba Tepe Beach, but a strong sea current pushed the landing boats onto a small beach known today as ANZAC Cove. This mistake turned out to be beneficial – the ANZAC Cove section was initially manned by only 200 Turkish soldiers. The beach ended with a 70-meter wall and the Turks thought it would be madness to attack in this area.

ANZAC FORCES (Australian and New Zealand Military Corps)

ANZAC forces land at Ari Burnu, on the beach codenamed Z, more than 20 km north of the rest of the sectors. ANZAC's attack inland is slowed down by ravines, hills and densely growing shrubs. The Turkish forces in this area are commanded by lieutenant colonel Mustafa Kemal. He utters these memorable words:

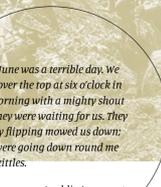
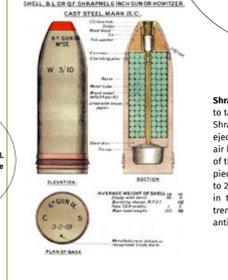
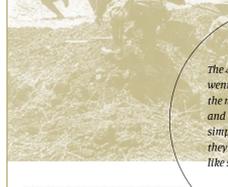
I don't order you to attack, I order you to die. In the time it takes us to die, other troops and commanders can come and take our places.

—Mustafa Kemal



The Deadly Toll
The 16th ANZAC battalion landed in a force of over 1,000 soldiers. After 5 days of fighting, just 309 soldiers remained.

On the first day of the ANZAC landing, 16,000 soldiers land on the beach. About 3,000 are killed or injured. The landing site has since been known as ANZAC Cove.



FRENCH FORCES

At Kumkale on the Asian side of the Dardanelles, French forces launch a mock attack to distract the Turks.



April 28th, 1915

The First Battle for Krithia
14,000 British-French forces attack deep into the peninsula. Relatively quickly, some sections of the Allied attack are stalled, while others manage to press on. As a result, some of the attacking forces are outflanked. On the left flank, the British broke into the Gully Ravine, but their attack is stopped by heavy Turkish machine gun fire. In some places, Turkish counterattacks push British forces as far back as their original starting positions.

May 27th – 31st, 1915
Battle for Baby 700 Hill
ANZAC forces launch an attack on the strategic Baba 700 Hill. They are supported by four battalions of a Royal Australian Division from Helles.

The attack goes wrong from the start. The Australians begin their attack, but the New Zealanders were not able to make it on time and begin their attack one hour later. The Turks are already waiting, massacring them with machine gun fire. The New Zealanders are forced to retreat. The Australians remain in the exposed position under heavy Turkish fire.

Kirithia
The village of Kirithia (now Alicine) and the fortified Achi Baba hill nearby were a major strategic obstacle for the British in reaching the fortifications that control the Dardanelles isthmus.

The Deadly Toll
The failed assault costs the ANZAC and the British 1,000 casualties with no strategic or tactical gains.

May 6th – 8th, 1915

The Second Battle for Krithia
The allied attack is quickly stalled. Aerial reconnaissance has failed to gain any information, so the Allies do not exactly know where the Turkish positions are located. As a result, an artillery bombardment preceding the attack is ineffective.

The Deadly Toll
The Australian 2nd Brigade of infantry conquers less than 500 m of land, while losing about 50% of its manpower. During the entire 2-day battle, the Allies lose about 30% of their men.

Jam Tin Bombs
Allied soldiers used home-made bombs – a can of beef or condensed milk was fitted with explosives and filled with a fuse. Such bombs, often placed under the bodies of the fallen and under stones, served as traps.

May 19th, 1915
Life in the Trenches
The Turkish attack on ANZAC positions to push the Allies into the sea, commanded by Lt. Mustafa Kemal, fails. Preparations for the Turkish attack were detected earlier thanks to good aerial reconnaissance.

Hard Tack biscuits
The basis of the rations was dried canned beef, jam and "Hard Tack" biscuits. They were so hard that there were cases of breaking teeth while eating. A typical meal was biscuits softened in water, mixed with beef and onions and seasoned with thyme harvested in the area. Biscuits were also used instead of paper to write letters home.

On 10th May ANZAC soldiers fire around 950,000 rifle shells at the attacking Turks.

After the battle, soldiers from both fighting sides smoke cigarettes together, treat their wounded and bury their dead.

Vermine
Millions of flies flew over the battlefield, and lice tormented the soldiers. Men often burned them with cigarettes or bathed in salty seawater in their clothes, exposing themselves to Turkish fire.

The Deadly Toll
The Turks suffer significant losses: of the 42,000 attacking Turks, 3,000 are killed and 10,000 are injured. ANZAC forces lose 160 dead and 468 wounded.

June 4th – 6th, 1915

The Third Battle for Krithia
The attack is preceded by a two-phase bombardment of the Turkish positions. The British manage to break through the Turkish lines in the center of the assault. The 127th infantry brigade take more than 200 Turkish prisoners of war. Turkish counterattacks push British forces to the right flank, the British are unable to continue their advance. The Turks hold their positions by countering the Allied assault.

We scratched ourselves till we dropped. The stizzling of burned lice was the sweetest sound we knew.

—A soldier's account

The Deadly Toll
Both sides again suffer significant losses – the British lose 4,500, the French over 2,000 and the Turks 9,000.

June 28th – July 5th, 1915
Battle of the Gully Ravine
This battle was part of the continuation of the Third Battle of Krithia.

A 2-day artillery bombardment of Turkish positions preceded the attack. The attack, however, breaks down on the right flank, where allied soldiers are decimated by machine gun fire and Turkish bayonet charges, losing 800 combatants during the attack. The Turks strike back for 8 days, losing 16,000 soldiers, including 10,000 dead.

A cross section of a 6 inch shell. Led balls visible inside



The Deadly Toll
A total of 600 Australians took part in the assault; 372 were killed or wounded. Ottoman casualties were relatively low.

August 6th, 1915
In Suva Bay, north of the ANZAC sector, the British stage a landing. This is meant to allow breakthrough in the ANZAC sector. The landing takes place in darkness, chaos reigns. When the moon rises, the Brits are easy target for Turkish snipers.

Resignation
Embittered by the failures of the Allies, Winston Churchill resigns from his position in government. He goes to France and serves as a frontline soldier on the Western Front. Later in his career, during Churchill's tenure in the House of Commons, his political opponents often rebuked him for this failure, crying out, "Remember the Dardanelles!"

August 7th, 1915
Battle of the Nek
The attack is meant to support New Zealand troops assaulting Conk Bairi.

August 9th, 1915
A first attempt by the British to capture Kicik Anafart and Biyik Anafart – both strategically important villages whose occupations would unlock the Suva sector – fails.

August 10th, 1915
A counterattack by the Turks commanded by Mustafa Kemal pushes the British out of their positions on Conk Bairi Hill.

August 21st, 1915
Battle of Scimitar Hill
This was the biggest battle of the Gallipoli campaign. The British attacked with three divisions. It, once again, failed to achieve its strategic goals. Eventually, the entire British advance towards Suva collapses.

The Deadly Toll
The British lose 5,000 men.

August 27th, 2015
The combined forces of ANZAC, British, and Nepalese Gurkhas again attack Hill 60 but fail to push the Turks out of their trenches.

December 18th, 1915
Evacuation of the ANZAC and Suva sectors
To confuse the enemy, ANZAC soldiers make use of clever stratagems. The Australians, for example, arrange a cric-net match that takes place under the cover of the night's share of equipment is transported on mules under the cover of the lion, but during the day the Allies simulate fake supply movements, creating the impression that nothing changes in the transport of equipment to the hills above the beaches and back.

October 14th, 1915
General Hamilton is recalled from his position as Commander-in-Chief of the Allied forces in Gallipoli. He is soon replaced by Gen. Charles Monro.

December 28th, 1915
The British government orders the evacuation of troops from Cape Helles.

January 6th, 1916
The Turks begin artillery fire intending to launch an attack on retreating British units. However, the Turkish soldiers, seeing the British leaving their positions anyway, refuse to attack and remain in their trenches.

8th – 9th January 1916
Completion of the evacuation of Allied forces from Cape Helles
35,000 soldiers, 3,689 horses and mules, 127 cannons, 328 vehicles and 1,600 tons of supplies are evacuated.

After the Battle

Military Catastrophe
The loss of the Dardanelles cost the First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill his position and reputation. It also put strain on the position of the Minister of War, General Horatio Kitchener, who due to his popularity managed to keep his post in government. In the domestic politics of Great Britain, the defeat caused a cabinet crisis which resulted in the collapse of the first government of Prime Minister Herbert Henry Asquith.

ANZAC Courage and Sacrifice
The sacrifices of the Australian and New Zealand soldiers are now inscribed in gold in the memory of their fellow countrymen, eventually becoming a foundation for the emerging independent identities of the nations from which they came.

Losses
Allies: 302,000 victims
Central Powers: 250,000 victims

National Hero – Atatürk
Thanks to Mustafa Kemal, who contributed greatly to the Turkish victory at Gallipoli with his extremely effective command, became a national hero. In 1923, he became the president of the newly created Turkish Republic. He made himself known as a thorough reformer of political and social relations, laying the foundations on which the modern Turkish state stands to this day. In 1934, he was officially titled Atatürk – Father of the Turks.

46,000 dead
123,600 wounded
110,000 evacuees

65,000 dead
97,000 wounded
69,000 evacuees

Commemoration

ANZAC Day
On April 25th, ANZAC Day is commemorated in Australia and New Zealand. Every year, over 10,000 participants from the former Allied countries come to Gallipoli to commemorate together with their own compatriots, the Turkish defenders. ANZAC Day has become a celebration of reconciliation and has been this way since the very beginning of the Turkish Republic.

Museum of New Zealand / Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington, New Zealand
The museum commemorates the participation of New Zealanders in WWI, including Gallipoli. The Gallipoli exhibition, 170 scale of minutes, is open until April 2022.

Historical National Park of the Gallipoli Peninsula
The park was established in 1973 and covers an area of 33 hectares. There are 50 Turkish memorials, including 19 war cemeteries, many of them symbolic. Over 30 cemeteries include the remains of Allied soldiers.

Auckland War Memorial in New Zealand
Annually, ANZAC DAY (April 25th) commemorations are held here.

