

MCH, 2011b

The end of the campaign - the Gallipoli campaign

The August offensive was the last major throw of the dice for the British allies in the Gallipoli campaign. In mid-September the weary New Zealanders were withdrawn to Lemnos for rest and reorganisation. By the time they returned to Anzac in November, the future of the campaign had been set.

Evacuation



Evacuation of wounded

The failure of the August offensive created doubts in London about the campaign, especially as the Western Front was assuming importance. General Sir Ian Hamilton, who was in charge of the British forces at Gallipoli, wanted more men. Opinion was against him. General Sir Charles Monro replaced him in mid-October and soon proposed evacuating the troops. Appalling weather conditions sealed the issue. A storm swept through the peninsula in late November. Water flooded the trenches and drowned men and drenched everything. The snow that followed left many dead from exposure. Survivors from both sides were miserable. In London, the authorities reluctantly agreed to a withdrawal.



'Evacuation from Salonica'

In marked contrast to the shambolic landings of April, the evacuation went without a hitch. New Zealanders left Suvla and Anzac on 19 and 20 December. Helles was emptied of its last British soldiers on the night of 8 and 9 January 1916. The Turks still held the peninsula.

Gallipoli: the legacy

Left behind were the dead: 87,000 Turks and 44,000 British and French, including 8700 Australians and 2721 New Zealanders. The wounded numbered in the hundreds of thousands, perhaps as many as 160,000 Turks and up to about 100,000 British allies, including 20,000 Australians and nearly 5000 New Zealanders.



Anzac Jack knife and case

The numbers belie the rough parity of the two sides during the campaign. Thirteen Allied divisions faced a roughly comparable Turkish force of 14 divisions, which had the advantage of operating on the interior lines of their homeland. The Allied build-up was always too little, too late. Inadequate leadership played a part in the Allied failure too, and it is clear that the British seriously underestimated the strength of the Turkish defenders and the ability of their leaders.



Anzac commemorative site panorama, Gallipoli

The campaign was a costly failure for the Allied forces, and an even more expensive victory for the Turks. For the Turks, it was the beginning of a process of national revival. The hero of Gallipoli, Kemal, would eventually become the founding president of the Turkish Republic. For Australians and New Zealanders, the campaign has

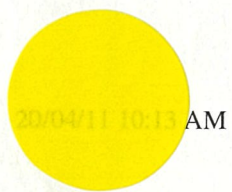
been seen as a key moment in a growing sense of national identity.

That significance would be in the future, for in the context of the Great War, the Gallipoli campaign had little impact. For the men who were there, their families and countless New Zealand communities, the effects would last for years.

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I dreamt about the horror until long after Gallipoli. Occasionally I still dream about it.
Yes, sometimes. But very seldom. Mostly it's gone away now. Mostly it's gone.

George Skerret in Maurice Shadbolt, *Voices of Gallipoli*, 1988

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