

## **BOOK REVIEW**

### **GALLIPOLI**

#### **New Perspective On The Mediterranean Expeditionary Force 1915-16**

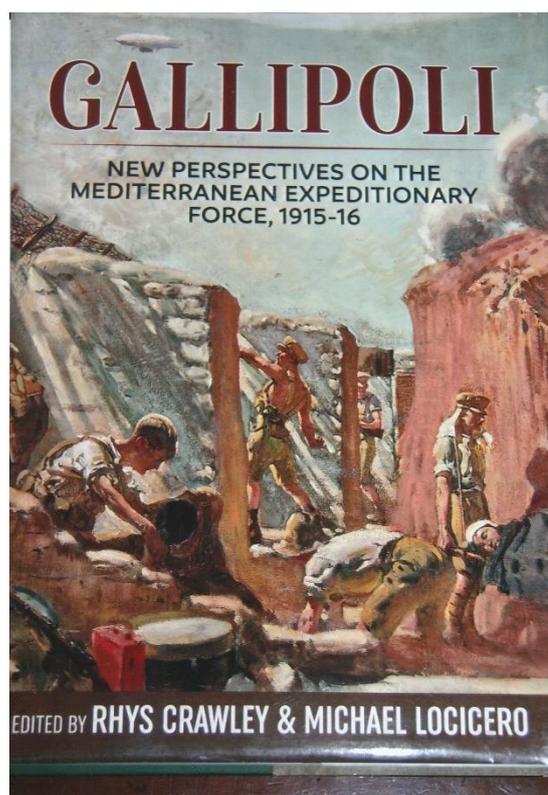
**Edited By Rhys Crawley & Michael Locicero**

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There have been many books written by numerous authors about the Gallipoli and Dardanelles Campaign and undoubtedly there will be many more. Valuable research and scholarship using primary and secondary sources has led to a knowledgeable understanding of the subject. In recent years, access to Turkish archives has also become available to researchers and historians. Books written by Turkish historians and other documentary material has been a considerable asset to the historiography of the Gallipoli campaign.

This book edited by Rhys Crawley and Michael Locicero is a collection of scholarly essays questioning how and why some of the fateful decisions were reached by commanders, their fitness to command, personality clashes, deployment of divisions and troops, the support structures, and other aspects of the campaign.

The book is divided into three parts: Part 1 – The MEF in Battle; Part 2 – Command & Control; Part 3 – Support, Enablers and Constraints. Twenty-one historians, British and Australian have contributed their essays to this fascinating book. Each historian has chosen a particular element of the Gallipoli campaign from the landings to the evacuation. The essays have revealing insights. For example, David Raw in Part 2, writes about Lieutenant-General Sir A.G. Hunter-Weston, commanding VII Corps, the medical condition, Bright's Disease and the feud between Hunter-Weston and Major General G.C.A. Egerton commander of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Lowland Territorial Division. Prior to May 1917, officers did not have medical examinations to certify that they were physically and medically fit for active overseas deployment. Egerton, who was socially very well connected had Bright's disease, a kidney disorder. He had a long and successful military career, was forthright in his views and was well respected by the troops he commanded. Whilst he was the Mediterranean and Inspector General of Overseas Forces in 1910, he had a



difference of opinion with General Sir Ian Hamilton, later the Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, which the latter never forgot. On being informed that Egerton was to command the 52<sup>nd</sup> Lowland Territorial Division, Hamilton demurred at the appointment. Egerton was aware that his inexperienced division had not been given the opportunity to acclimatise to the conditions at Gallipoli. He was critical of Hunter-Weston's battle plans which resulted in heavy casualties for Egerton's brigades at Gully Ravine and Achi Baba in July. The climatic conditions at Gallipoli exacerbated Egerton's medical condition but he continued with his duties. When Hunter-Weston and Hamilton learned of Egerton's health problems, they took the opportunity to discretely undermine his position. However, it was Hunter-Weston who collapsed exhausted in July and was evacuated from the peninsula. Hamilton had Egerton replaced in September, before the former was relieved of his command. On arrival in Egypt, Egerton collapsed and underwent a serious operation from which he fully recovered. This essay illustrates that health was of vital importance to both officer's and other ranks. For officers on active service, especially those holding senior command positions, their known or undiagnosed medical problems could affect their efficiency and effectiveness to command.

Other topics covered in the book are air power, nursing, chaplains, topography of Gallipoli, RND, French Dardanelles campaign of 1915-16, the experiences of the 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Highland Mountain Brigade and the Prisoners of War in Turkish captivity. There are numerous photographs accompanying the text, black and white maps, outline drawings, sketches, and German cartoons. The coloured maps perhaps could have been more detailed and there are some typographical errors. Where necessary bibliography notes and references are at foot of the relevant pages.

There are over seven hundred pages in this book, including the index, which does offer the reader some new perspectives, viewpoints, and questions some the established assertions found in other books on the Gallipoli Campaign. The documentary material, both Allied and Turkish, which is now available to modern historians, provides a broader and more balanced insight into the progress of the campaign from its conception to the eventual evacuation. This book succeeds in achieving a new perspective and is a welcome addition to the bookshelf of those who have an interest in the Gallipoli campaign.

Roger Coleman