



GALLIPOLI 100

REMEMBERING



What does Gallipoli mean?

To illustrate what it means to the different countries which sent soldiers to Gallipoli, we have imagined the following short pieces, as though spoken by people from these countries. They could be used as a starting point for a drama piece on the subject.



What does Gallipoli mean in Britain?

'We think Gallipoli was somewhere away from the main fighting on the Western Front. We don't really know what happened there but we think it was a disaster and somehow it's been airbrushed out of our history books wasn't it where the Trojan War took place, and where Byron swam across the Hellespont? We may have seen 'All the King's Men' the TV programme about the soldiers from the Royal Estate at Sandringham who 'disappeared' at Gallipoli. If we know a little more about it, we see it as Winston Churchill's big mistake, which led to his years in the wilderness. We feel a little ashamed that we didn't manage to win a victory against an 'easy' enemy. We're looking for a scapegoat someone to blame for the failure. We imagine that the generals were stuck in the past, fighting a Victorian war in the 20th century, blinded by the perception that the British Empire was all-conquering. Looking for something to save face, we clutch at the evacuation, when soldiers showed their ingenuity by designing self-firing rifles to confuse the enemy, and which even a German historian has described as a masterpiece of military strategy. Today many British people think Gallipoli was a battle fought between the ANZACs and the Turks, without realising that many, many more British soldiers died there than Australians and New Zealanders.'



What does Gallipoli mean in Ireland?

'Gallipoli came at a bad time for Ireland. In 1914 we had just been promised home rule after centuries of domination by England. Then the War came. Unfortunately our Irish MPs in London agreed to support the British war effort in exchange for home rule after the war. Meanwhile back in Ireland two sides were forming those who wanted to stay in the United Kingdom and those who wanted independence. Coming in 1915, you can see why for many Irish people, Gallipoli might have seemed like 'somebody else's war'. There's another, more chilling memory of Gallipoli: the two Irish battalions which landed there on 25th April 1915 were cut to pieces by the Turks defending the cliffs. They lost so many men that they had to reform into one battalion the Royal Dublin Fusiliers and the Royal Munster Fusiliers became the 'Dubsters'. Adding insult to injury, when the heroes returned to Ireland they weren't welcomed back anyone in a British uniform was now seen as a traitor to Ireland. Now perhaps you can see why we don't talk about Gallipoli that much.'



What does Gallipoli mean in France?

'Ask the man in the street and you'll probably get this reply: 'Mad. Whose idea was it to send French soldiers to the Dardanelles [we don't call it Gallipoli] when everyone was needed to defend our own borders? I'll tell you whose idea it was the British, that incompetent hothead Churchill in particular.' I'm not so sure, though. It's more complicated than that. Our politicians had an agenda of their own. They saw that the Western Front was deadlocked and the idea of an attack on Germany from the east was attractive. They also saw that the Ottoman Empire was weak, and if it could be beaten France could take control of parts of Syria and the Middle East. However it didn't turn out that way not until 1918, anyway. So it's easier for us to blame the British for the disaster at Gallipoli, and quietly forget our part in it. We lost 15,000 men there, though mainly soldiers from our colonies in West and North Africa.'



What does Gallipoli mean in Australia?

'Although 8709 Australians died at Gallipoli we view the campaign with great pride. It's all about what Australia was before Gallipoli and what it was after Gallipoli. Australia started as a penal colony the British sent us the people they didn't want in their own country. The land is harsh and we had to be tough to survive. After Gallipoli the world saw Australians not as convicts (although they could still be rowdy, unruly, drunken and undisciplined!) but as strong and independent. The true manly, butch, hard drinking, straight talking Australian character was recognised there. In some ways, the Australians felt closer to the Turks than to the British after Gallipoli they respected each other and felt that both countries were fighting to affirm their national identity. Now, Gallipoli is seen as Australian sacred ground: thousands of Australians have made the journey to attend the dawn service at ANZAC cove every 25th April.'



What does Gallipoli mean in New Zealand?

'Although Anzac Day, the anniversary of the first day of conflict, does not mark a military triumph, it does remind us of a very important episode in New Zealand's history. Great suffering was caused to a small country by the loss of so many of its young men. But the Gallipoli campaign showcased attitudes and attributes - bravery, tenacity, practicality, ingenuity, loyalty to King and comrades - that helped New Zealand define itself as a nation, even as it fought unquestioningly on the other side of the world in the name of the British Empire. At the time the sacrifice seemed to have been in vain, for the under-resourced and poorly-conducted campaign did not have any significant influence on the outcome of World War I. However the Gallipoli Campaign was an awakening for New Zealand, a moment when a young nation emerged, tragically, onto the world stage as an independent identity separate from its colonial parent.'

(Quote from the New Zealand Embassy - <http://www.nzembassy.com/node/4252>)



What does Gallipoli mean in Turkey?

'It's immensely important to us: our modern state was formed in the crucible of Gallipoli. In the face of huge armies drawn from all corners of the world, we laid down our lives and held them off. We celebrate the victory on 18th March every year we call it 'Martyrs' Day'. This was the day we stopped the enemy fleet from sailing up the Dardanelles Strait. One of our leaders at Gallipoli was Mustafa Kemal, whose personal bravery and military skills inspired his men to fight off the ANZACs. After the war when Turkey became a republic, Kemal became its first president and was renamed Atatürk (meaning 'Father of the Turks'). Everywhere you go in Turkey today you will find photos of him. Today the Gallipoli peninsula is sacred ground for Turkey and thousands of Turks visit every year. But our soldiers aren't buried there they are on the Asian side of the Dardanelles, in the ancestral soil of Turkey.'



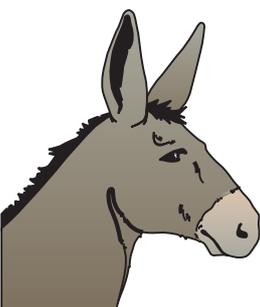
What does Gallipoli mean in India?

'We look back to the First and Second World Wars with very mixed feelings. India was a British colony so we were required to fight to support the British Empire, as part of the British Indian Army. However, British power was drawing to a close and Indians were beginning to think about Independence. Some Indians supported British rule but many yearned to be free of it. The Indians who fought at Gallipoli (about 5000, so not a large part of the allied army) fought more as professional soldiers than as representatives of their country but got a reputation for their bravery: 1358 lost their lives. So today we see Gallipoli as a symbol of the past, when Indians fought in 'a European war', but with honour. There's one strange thing, though. At the time India and Pakistan were all one country, and most Pakistanis were Muslims. The British government was worried that they might not fight well against the Turks who were also Muslims of course so they weren't sent to fight at Gallipoli.'



What does Gallipoli mean in Germany?

'In many ways, Gallipoli was a sideshow for us. The important struggles were taking place on the Western Front and against Russia on the Eastern Front. We didn't send many soldiers to Gallipoli, although we had a major part to play there: our General Liman von Sanders was in overall charge of the Ottoman troops. In all other areas there were German officers advising and directing operations troop movements, artillery emplacements, naval and air operations. We think about 40 of our soldiers were killed at Gallipoli. Today, Germans look back at the part they played in the two World Wars especially the Second War with a sense of guilt. We are more concerned with keeping the peace these days, and building a new Europe free from war.'



Don't forget the mules and donkeys!

It wasn't just humans at Gallipoli. There were 4316 mules (with 2000 carts and 10,000 tons of hay, barley and maize). The land is so hilly that the only way for soldiers to receive their ammunition and supplies was by mule. There were four Mule Cart Corps, and where the ground got too rough for carts, supplies were carried on the mules' backs. Donkeys were also used but more often for carrying the wounded. When the allied army was evacuated most of the mules and donkeys were shot so that they didn't fall into enemy hands.