

Gallipoli: The Pilgrimage Guide

Garrie Hutchinson

Reviewed by Dr Karl James

One of the first Australians to make the 'pilgrimage' to Gallipoli was Charles Bean. In 1919 he returned to Gallipoli with the Australian Historical Mission to answer what he called, the 'riddles of Anzac'. Bean and his team spent three months on the peninsula, researching the battlefields, collecting relics and reporting on the graves at Gallipoli. For part of this time, Bean toured the battlefield with the Turkish staff officer Major Zeki Bey.

Bean later wrote about the mission's work in his *Gallipoli Mission*, first published in 1948. Although Bean did not intend it at such, *Gallipoli Mission* was one of the earliest battlefield guides to Gallipoli. However, it was not a commercial success. Published by the Australian War Memorial, only 4115 copies were printed, the last of which was not sold until 1959.

At that time, Gallipoli was difficult to get to and it received few tourists. In 1965 a party of just over 300 from Australia and New Zealand, about half of whom were original ANZACs, returned to Gallipoli for the fiftieth anniversary of the landing. Watching the veterans come ashore in lifeboats were officials, journalists, some locals from nearby villages, and four Australian hitchhikers – two boys and two girls.

How things have changed. Since the late 1980s there has been a steady increase in the number of people visiting the peninsula, with thousands attending the Anzac Day Dawn Service each year. They go for a variety of reasons.

Early 'pilgrims' to Gallipoli were either veterans or relatives of those killed. The old soldiers wanted to walk the battlefield again and visit the graves of their coppers. For family members, it was a chance to see for themselves where their loved one had lived, fought, and died. Those travelling to Gallipoli today are probably motivated by similar reasons, although time dictates that the search is for the grave of a distant relative. For many young people, the dawn service at Gallipoli has become a coming-of-age ritual. Those who visit Gallipoli cannot help but be moved in some way.

The official war artist, George Lambert, who accompanied Bean to Gallipoli in 1919, wrote that 'this place gives one the blues, though it is very beautiful.' Another visitor thought Gallipoli had a 'magnetic power that tugs at the heart and imagination'. It is a 'spiritual thing' thought a young Australian backpacker. Matching the popular interest in the campaign, modern 'pilgrims' are now well served with a variety of guidebooks and no longer need to rely on a battered old copy of Bean.

A guide still highly recommended is Phil Taylor's and Pam Cupper's *Gallipoli: A Battlefield Guide* (1989, 1997, and 2000). So too is Nigel Steel's *The Battlefields of Gallipoli: Then and Now* (1990, 1999). More recently, New Zealanders have been well served with Ian McGibbon's *Gallipoli: A*

Guide to New Zealand Battlefields and Memorials (2004).

Released in time for Anzac Day 2007, *Gallipoli: The Pilgrimage Guide*, by journalist Garrie Hutchinson, is the latest addition to the field. Hutchinson writes, 'no other place has the resonance of *Gallipoli*.' This is because of its unique location and terrain, its association with antiquity, the preservation of the battlefield, and its revered place in the Australian national psyche.

Hutchinson is well suited to make such an observation. He has explored many Australian battlefields around the world, and last year his *Pilgrimage: A Traveller's Guide To Australia's Battlefields* was published (and reviewed in the Spring 2006 *Defender*). This year's *Gallipoli: The Pilgrimage Guide* comes from the first chapter of *Pilgrimage*, merely using the same text, photographs, and structure.

Gallipoli is divided into three main sections. The first is a brief overview of the entire Gallipoli campaign and its context. The second concentrates on the Australian campaign at Gallipoli, from the landing through the August offensive to the evacuation. (It should be noted that this is an Australian, or possibly an ANZAC-focused guide book. The British and French campaigns at Cape Hellas and Suvla Bay receive little attention.) The third and largest section covers 'Gallipoli today'. This section provides vignettes on the many features on the peninsula and Istanbul: significant sites, cemeteries, and memorials.

The final few pages of the 'Gallipoli today' section is a 'travel tool kit' that provides some travel tips and contact details for recommended tour operators. It is unfortunate that, with the publication of this new Gallipoli guidebook, Hutchinson did not expand this section. The strength of Taylor's and Cupper's *Gallipoli: A Battlefield Guide* was the attention it gave to logistics – it provided potential travellers with sketches and maps, distances between features, signposts, and the recommended mode of travel, whether by foot, bicycle or vehicle. This advice is now several years old and Hutchinson has missed an opportunity to provide up-to-date information.

Despite this, Hutchinson's *Gallipoli: The Pilgrimage Guide* will ably serve Australian and New Zealanders on their way to Anzac Cove. It is a slim and stylish book, and Hutchinson has a writing style that is easy to read. Its real attraction for pilgrims is that it is inexpensive, and, probably most importantly, is small enough to easily fit into backpack or pocket. ♦

Garrie Hutchinson, 'Gallipoli: The Pilgrimage Guide', Black Inc, Melbourne, 2007, Softback, 84pp., RRP \$A14.95.

