

# Exploring the *Gallipoli Campaign* 2011 & 2013



Jan and I have been lucky enough to make two coach tours which allowed us to follow as best we could the Campaign – in 2011 to Turkey and 2013 to Malta (which acted as a Hospital base for the Campaign). Neither trip was designed for the World War I historian - so we depended on adapting the coach tour - and a little truancy.

## 2011 Turkey

We only managed

- a day on *Gallipoli*,
- a stop-off at *Izmir* to recall the Civil War which followed the end of World War I when the last Greeks were expelled from their historic colony of *Smyrna* –with *Kemal Ataturk* gaining the credit.
- We also visited *Ankara* and managed time in the *Kemal Ataturk Mausoleum*.

### A. The Dardanelles



The campaign, the brainchild of Winston Churchill aimed to assist the beleaguered Russians by sending the navy to capture first Constantinople, the then Turkish Capital, after which the navy would supply the Russians via the Black sea and Odessa.

The Turks still recall with irony that the attack commenced on 18 March 1915 and because of poor planning and Turkish preparation, assisted by the German von Sanders, it was a failure. Appropriately called the “Narrows”, perhaps the straights above were too narrow to let the Navy avoid hostile shore batteries.

The failure of the Naval campaign led to a hastily planned land attack on the Gallipoli Peninsular. Its capture would then lead to an attack on Constantinople.

The landings, started with troops hastily sent from Egypt, on 25 April 1915 – forever since commemorated as **ANZAC Day**.

**B. Gallipoli**

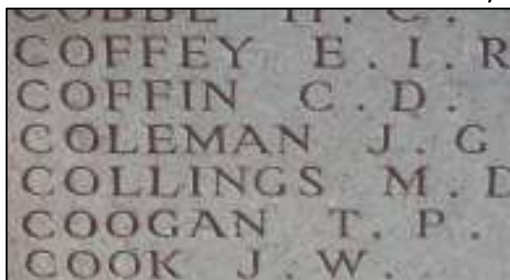


Today the Turkish Government has designated the area as a National Memorial Park with its combination of untouched beaches and sand dunes and looming memorials such as the **Lone Pine**.

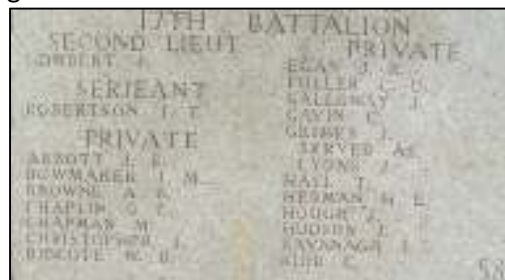
There will be much more to see in future at *Cape Helles* - but the area was cordoned off while the museum was developed.



The **Lone Pine** cemetery holds the graves of two Tewkesburians



The Australian Emigrant, **J G Coleman**, whose family ran a draper's emporium in the High Street. His brother, **Raymond**, who emigrated with him, was killed in 1917 at *Passchendaele*.



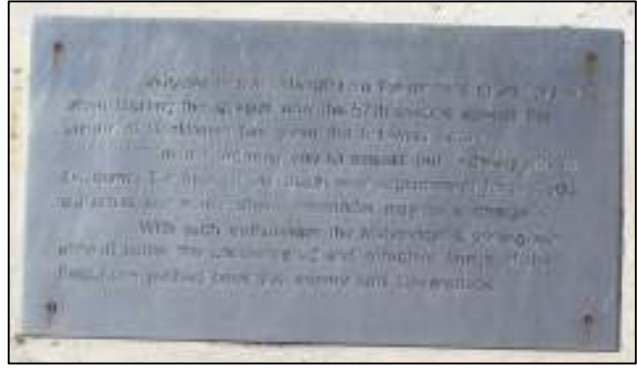
**Wilfred B. Didcote** was another emigrant who lost one British based brother, **Albert** in 1915 at *Loos* whilst fellow emigrant, **Harry**, was killed in Belgium in 1918. Because she had lost three sons, their mother inaugurated the War Memorial in 1922.



From the Memorial we could see beaches which made invasion so attractive - yet so murderous when confronted by a well-prepared defence.



Allied trenches, difficult to dig in the rocky terrain, afforded little shelter.



Also celebrated is the victorious Turkish leader, Mustafa Kemal, who inspired his troops with his order: ***“I am not ordering you to assault; I am ordering you to die”***. The Allies, at first, underestimated the skill and determination of Turkish troops: ***“Johnny Turk”***.



A tourist memento which reminds us of Turkish determination and strength.



A very moving memorial which emphasises the eventual, mutual respect between enemy soldiers but no doubting the perspective portrayed.

**C. Visit to Izmir – formerly the Greek Colony of Smyrna**

This coastal port is south of Gallipoli on the mainland. It was a Greek Colony until war broke out between Greece and Turkey after the World War ended. Such was the crisis that Churchill wished to resume war with Turkey. However he was overruled; the Turks won the war and expelled the Greeks amidst accusation of violence and brutality. Today that seems all forgotten on the surface.



Credit for the victory has been accorded to the victor at ***Gallipoli, 1923 President Kemal Ataturk***



#### D. Ankara – the Kemal Ataturk Mausoleum



**General Mustafa Kemal** (1881-1938) enjoyed a successful political career after his war heroics. He was PM 1920-1923 and then President, 1923-1938. In 1934 he took the title ***Kemal Ataturk*** (*Father of the Turks*) after modernising the country into a Secular Muslim state, which it remains today. In 1953 his imposing Mausoleum and park was opened in **Ankara**, the modern Turkish Capital.



The atmosphere is austere and militaristic



His Sarcophagus



A fitting tribute to the style of rule of *Kemal Ataturk*

### E. Post Script Malta 2013 – a Hospital Refuge in World War I

Wounded soldier **Pte. Thomas Day** was sent firstly to Alexandria before earning his “*blighty one*”, in being sent home to hospital in Newcastle and a discharge with a Silver War badge.

More serious cases would be sent to Malta – where *Vera Brittain* was a *VAD* nurse. **Pte. W A Attwood** [#] of the *1<sup>st</sup> Herefords* was badly wounded in Gallipoli and was sent to **Malta** – where, despite the expert care, he died of his wounds on 6 December 1915. Such soldiers were then buried in the military section of the delightful Gothic *Addolerata Church*, in **Valletta**. It is not on the tourist itinerary so, to pay my respects, I had to be a condoned truant!



Delightfully Gothic – and a very steep climb



It is a civilian cemetery with a military section. Because the church and burial ground comprises had rock, the bodies were buried in hewn graves with unusually for *CWGC* three men to a grave





Another Lone Pine in a memorial  
– with military graves in front.



Pte. Attwood is buried with two comrades



Pte. Attwood's plot and his reference number - 682



I really appreciated my truancy as it was so worthwhile paying my respects at the grave of this young man from Newtown.

*John Dixon and Jan Nattrass*