

Subject of the book:

Title: *Expedition to the Golden Horn. Military Operations in the Dardanelles and on the Aegean Sea (August 1914 – March 1915)*, Wydawnictwo Arkadiusz Wingert, Krakow 2008;

373 pages including: 17 appendixes, bibliography and index; 17 maps, 157 pictures; size: 170 x 245 mm; cover: hardback; ISBN: 978-83-918940-7-1

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This book is the first comprehensive examination of naval operations in the Dardanelles and the Izmir (Smyrna) region of Turkey prior to the Allied landings on the Gallipoli Peninsula in April, 1915. The book draws upon numerous primary source accounts from diaries and memoirs, many of them illuminated for the first time out of Turkey, to include information written in English, French, German, modern Turkish, Ottoman Turkish, Russian and Polish. In addition to conducting a thorough analysis of those sources and secondary materials, the author conducted over ten battlefield research expeditions to the Dardanelles and Izmir between 1993 and 2008. Walking the ground and observing the area from the sea proved to be especially insightful, particularly since much of the area has been preserved, as much as possible.

In conducting this work, the author confronted numerous and often conflicting interpretations of the land and naval campaign offered by numerous historians concerning the Ottoman victory over the Allied fleet, the Turkish defense capabilities, and the role of Turkish officers in finally ejecting the allied presence. The Turkish victory was far from a fluke; success was possible due to the critical placement and construction of the still existing forts and tactics employed by the defenders. While the British fleet was potent, the concept for how to employ that fleet was inappropriate given the nature of the Turkish defense. Turkish victory was not due to British ineptitude or luck but to a carefully designed defensive plan that was properly executed. This conclusion and the evidence that supports it shed new light upon the naval war at the Dardanelles.

The book consists of:

- **Foreword** (including: Credits, Language and Transcription Notes, and Abbreviations)

- **Chapter one:** This chapter explores the geography and climate of the battlefield, includes a brief overview of the naval forces of Great Britain, France, Germany and Austria-Hungary in the area, and contains a detailed description of the naval and land warfare potential of the Ottoman Empire to include Turkey's military, political and economic background at the outbreak of WWI.
- **Chapter two:** The chapter describes the dramatic escape of the German Mediterranean Squadron to the Dardanelles, the subsequent Allied naval blockade, issues concerning the mobilization and the concentration of the Ottoman forces in the area, and the circumstances concerning the Turkish-German alliance and the consequences of the *Goeben* and *Breslau*'s entry into the Ottoman territorial waters.
- **Chapter three:** This section contains a detailed description of Turkish preparations for the defense of the Dardanelles, as well as the first bombardment of the outer forts (November 3, 1914), the sinking of battleship *Mesudiye* (December 13, 1914), the destruction of the French submarine *Saphir* (January 15, 1915), and the Turkish response and reinforcement of the defenses in the area.
- **Chapter four:** The chapter explains the genesis of the British plan to seize the Dardanelles and Constantinople. Also included are the French and Russian views of operations in the area, and the commencement of the military portion of the Dardanelles Operation between February 19 and 25, 1915.
- **Chapter five:** This section discusses the secret negotiations between the British and the Turks regarding the surrender of the Dardanelles and Izmir. Most importantly, the chapter contains the most detailed account ever published in the West of the military operations in the Gulfs of Izmir and Saros and near Kabatepe between February 26 and March 17, 1915.
- **Chapter six:** This chapter provides a detailed analysis of the naval and land operations at the South entrance to the Dardanelles between February 26 and March 4, 1915. This account has never been fully explored by historians. More importantly, it explains how the Allied experiences from this initial attack into the area were largely ignored or forgotten entirely by the Allies only a few months later when planning the Gallipoli landings.

- **Chapter seven:** This chapter includes a detailed account and tactical analysis of the military activities on naval war in the Dardanelles between March 5 and 17, 1915. It includes the overlooked engagement between the British battleship HMS *Queen Elizabeth* and the Turkish battleship *Barbaros Hayrettin*, as well as an exceedingly detailed analysis of the mine-sweeping operations in the Dardanelles.
- **Chapter eight:** This section covers the main Allied naval assault on the Dardanelles' forts on March 18, 1915, to include shedding new light on the course of events. The author proves that the French battleship *Bouvet* was not sunk by the mine as many historians have claimed but by Turkish coastal artillery. Moreover, the British battleships *Irresistible* and *Ocean*, although initially mined, were also sunk by Turkish artillery and speculates that, if the battle had been fought in better weather conditions, both ships probably could have avoided disaster. A careful analysis of the 18th March battle based upon primary source research and a physical inspection of the area leads to the conclusion that the Turkish defenses were well-prepared and capable of damaging or sinking British warships. Given the heavy losses of the Allied navy, the use of naval forces alone in the early stages of the Dardanelles Operation had no chance for success. Indeed, the British navy inflicted little damage upon the Turkish fortifications and, when coupled with a sufficient amount of ammunition reserves, allowed the Turks to continue the fight against the entire Allied navy for several additional days while the Allies were unable to renew operations immediately.

- **Conclusion**

- **Annexes:**

17 annexes, basing mainly on the Turkish sources (annexes 4-17) consist of:

Annex 1: list of British ships (with technical data) participating in the described events,

Annex 2: list of French and Russian ships (with technical data) participating in the described events,

Annex 3: list of German ships (with technical data) participating in the described events,

Annex 4: list of Turkish ships (with technical data) participating in the described events,

Annex 5: biographical data for the key participants,

Annex 6: coastal batteries defending the Gulf of Izmir,

Annex 7: names of the most important forts and batteries of the Dardanelles Fortified Zone in the sources of all fighting sides (Turkish, German, English and French),

Annex 8: minefield in the Dardanelles (August 4, 1914 – March 9, 1915),

Annex 9: guns deployed in the Dardanelles Fortified Zone (until July 31, 1914)

Annex 10: firing range of the guns, howitzers, and mortars deployed in the Dardanelles Fortified Zone

Annex 11: ammunition reserves of the 2nd Artillery Brigade in the Dardanelles Fortified Zone (until August 14, 1914)

Annex 12: personnel, armament, and ammunition reserves of the artillery units in the 2nd and 3rd defense sectors of the Dardanelles Straits

Annex 13: an account concerning the mines emplaced by the Ottoman minelayer *Nusret*

Annex 14: artillery of the Dardanelles Fortified Zone (until March 18, 1915)

Annex 15: ammunition reserves of the forts and batteries in the Dardanelles Fortified Zone prior to the main assault of the Allied navy (March 18, 1915) and immediately afterward

Annex 16: officer ranks of the Ottoman Navy and of the other navies (Austria-Hungarian, German, British and French)

Annex 17: officer ranks of the Ottoman land forces and of the other countries (Austria-Hungarian, German, British and French)

- **Maps:**

17 maps showing the area, the positions of the coastal and mine defenses, the firing range of the guns and the course of naval bombardments.

- **Illustrations:**

157 photographs and drawings, mainly historical and the larger amount never published before from the author's private collection, two used by permission of the British Imperial War Museum, and the rest taken by himself in the Dardanelles. The pictures show key commanders, ships, the forts and batteries, the guns, the mines, and illustrations of the various maneuvers and engagements.

- **Bibliography:**

235 entries from 60 archival and other sources, four of them previously unpublished. Of the 39 sources and 53 books in Turkish that are used, only one was previously explored by non-Turkish authors (Dr. Edward J. Erickson and Dr. Tim Travers) with the rest never being used by any Western historian.