

Media release

Remarkable new Gallipoli memoir comes to light

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A Gallipoli veteran's memoir that lay disregarded in the archives for more than 60 years is being published this month.

Alec Riley was a territorial soldier in the Manchester Brigade of the British Army's 42nd (East Lancashire) Division. He spent four months on the Gallipoli peninsula before being evacuated sick. As a signaller, Riley had the rare opportunity to move freely about the Allied lines during the Gallipoli Campaign. He was also party to harrowing messages between front-line officers and senior commanders. Riley kept a diary and made detailed notes, adding to them while his recollections were vivid, and small details, colours and shapes could be visualised accurately.

Few soldiers returned to Gallipoli after the war, but Riley made two pilgrimages to the peninsula, travelling independently to explore the abandoned battlefield. His unique account contrasts 'the silent nullahs of Gallipoli' with the hell he saw in war. Riley's photographs, taken fifteen years apart, illustrate the account.

The long-delayed publication of Riley's book is "a real event," says Peter Hart, who wrote the definitive one-volume history of Gallipoli (Oxford University Press, 2011).

"Riley's book will take its place alongside the very best Gallipoli accounts. No grandstanding, no purple prose, just a brilliant reflection of the raw mixture of nerve-shredding drama, tedium, and discomfort that typified life on the Peninsula."

Stephen Chambers, historian and author of six guide books in the Battleground Gallipoli series, calls it "an extraordinary book from anything but an ordinary Gallipolitan."

"Riley's gem of an account, recently discovered, brings alive the campaign in a vivid, well-written and compelling true story of one man's war."

The memoir has been brought to publication by two Gallipoli experts, Michael Crane and Bernard de Broglio. The editors have supplemented the text extensively with maps, notes and biographies.

Gallipoli Diary 1915 will appeal to readers of WWI and military history, but especially to those with an interest in the Gallipoli campaign. It will be bookended by two further diaries that record Riley's mobilisation and training in Egypt, and his time in the Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley, where he spend a year recovering from his ordeal on the peninsula. Collectively the diaries offer a unique window into the experiences of a pre-war Territorial soldier, before, during and after Gallipoli.

About the editors

Michael Crane has studied the Gallipoli campaign for over 40 years. He has made nine independent field trips to the peninsula, using GPS to map trench lines. Mike's grandfather and great uncle served in the campaign and his great uncle is buried in Redoubt Cemetery. He is currently writing the history of their unit, the 1/9 Bn the Manchester Regiment, and is a contributor to the Gallipoli Association's journal, *The Gallipolian*. Mike saw active service in the British Army principally with the Parachute Regiment, earning a Mention in Despatches. In an unusual career change, for the last 25 years he has owned and operated an interior design consultancy, much to the amusement of his former comrades.

Bernard de Broglio is a member of the Australian Society of WW1 Aero Historians. He has a particular interest in the Aegean air war 1915-1918, and has walked and photographed the Allied and Ottoman aerodromes employed in the campaign. In 2011, he mapped the location of Australian hospitals on Lemnos with Cheryl Ward, playwright and producer of 'Through These Lines', a theatrical production based on Anzac nurses' letters and diaries. Bern is also a member of the Gallipoli Association and contributes to their journal on topics as diverse as the Dardanelles Cup (the football tournament played at Helles), the five Allied aircraft forced to land at Suvla, and the experiences of a doctor with the Imperial German Navy's machine-gun detachment.

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About the book

Gallipoli Diary 1915 by Alec Riley, edited by Michael Crane & Bernard de Broglio

- 360 pages
- 14 maps, 47 black and white photographs
- Comprehensive index
- Dimensions: 6.14 × 9.21 inches
- Formats: hardback (978-0-6452359-0-6), paperback (978-0-6452359-1-3) and ebook (978-0-6452359-2-0)