GALLIPOLI FROM ABOVE

THE CONTROVERSIAL TRUTH ABOUT THE GALLIPOLI LANDING

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY WAIN FIMERI

PRESS KIT

Publicist
Marian Page
0411 424 055
marianbpage@hotmail.com
One Line Synopsis

Gallipoli from Above reveals the real story about the Gallipoli landing dispelling the myths about poor planning, wrong beaches and British generals sending Australian troops to certain death.

One Paragraph Synopsis

This one-hour documentary overturns many of the myths about the Gallipoli landing; that the Australians landed at dawn, on the wrong beach, with little knowledge of the Turkish defences and they were led by incompetent British officers. In fact nothing could be further from the truth. The Australians ran their own show, using aerial intelligence, emerging technology and innovative tactics to land 20,000 troops on a heavily defended and precipitous shoreline. They used an aircraft carrier and a squadron of biplanes to gather detailed information on the disposition of the Turkish defenders and developed a plan for the landing that avoided significant casualties. It is now nearly 100 years since the landing and hundreds of books, movies and documentaries have failed to grasp the significance of the ANZAC achievement. Based on Hugh Dolan’s book 36 Days: The Untold Story Behind the Gallipoli Landings, Gallipoli From Above sets out to change forever the way Australians think about Gallipoli.

Presented by Hugh Dolan

Hugh Dolan is a recently retired Squadron Leader in the RAAF. After completing a masters degree in history at Oxford University, he enlisted in the British Army as a private. He served in Bosnia as a junior NCO where he witnessed the importance of military intelligence in operations planning. He has since worked as a senior intelligence officer in both Iraq and Australia. His book 36 Days: The Untold Story Behind the Gallipoli Landings is based on work done for his PhD.
About the Presenter -
Squadron Leader Hugh Dolan

Hugh Dolan has first hand knowledge of planning military operations. He has served as an intelligence officer in Iraq and Afghanistan. His recently published book 36 Days: The Untold Story Behind the Gallipoli Landings has quietly become an Australian best seller, with over 10,000 Australians buying and reading this unique account of the Gallipoli landings.

The genesis of the book began one Anzac Day eve in 2003. Whilst serving on a deployment overseas, Hugh wondered if there was an intelligence officer on the staff of ANZAC Headquarters, someone reporting on enemy defences prior to the ANZAC landing. He decided to research this on his return to Australia. In the basement of the Australian War Memorial Hugh found an original ANZAC planning map of the Gallipoli Peninsula, dated 20 April 1915. This map was covered in handwritten notes describing Turkish positions on Gallipoli Peninsula, and it was the beginning of a journey to discover how they found this information. Hugh began to discover that espionage and spies played a major role in the months and weeks before the landing.

Hugh found the original reports, and a cypher, a code in which the spy communicated valuable intelligence on Turkish movements to London. As an air intelligence officer, Hugh was delighted to find that the role of aerial intelligence was much greater than previously thought; he found that the world’s first aircraft carrier, “Ark Royal” was operating off the Gallipoli coast from the 17th of February 1915.

Hugh has used his experience as a serving intelligence officer to piece together the role intelligence played in the days before the landing. What he has discovered will overturn many of the myths about Gallipoli.
SYNOPSIS

When Churchill devised a plan to outflank the Germans by forcing a passage through the Dardanelles, he set in train a series of events. When it was over the British wanted to forget about Gallipoli, but for Australia the campaign would become a foundation myth of nationhood.

While there has been much focus on the battle, little attention has been paid to the planning that preceded it. The landing was one of the most complex and daunting operations in the history of warfare and the risks associated with it were enormous. Aerial reconnaissance played a significant and previously unrecognized role.

Gallipoli From Above follows the Australian officers who planned the landing at Anzac Cove and the aircrew whose flimsy flying machines brought back the much needed information on which those plans were based. The British proposal for simultaneous dawn landings at Anzac Cove and Cape Helles was always going to be an uphill battle even with the help of a naval bombardment designed to destroy the Turkish defences.

The Australian Officers were sceptical about how effective the proposed bombardment might be, in particular they were concerned it would alert the enemy to their approach. They decided to use aerial reconnaissance to reveal the full extent of Turkish defences and, as a result, came up with their own plan: a silent, night-time surprise attack designed to catch the Turkish defenders in their beds.

The rehearsals for the landing were chaotic. With the moon setting later each night, repeated delays meant the hours of darkness available for a surprise attack were rapidly decreasing. Aerial reconnaissance was revealing more and more Turkish soldiers in the area of the landing, with new gun emplacements and freshly dug trenches being discovered on a daily basis.

The ANZACs utilised every piece of technology they could get their hands on and made a detailed plan to deal with the Turkish defences. As a result, the Australians came ashore with only minor casualties. By contrast, the English officers in charge of the Cape Helles landing ignored the aerial intelligence and approached the shore in daylight after an ineffective bombardment. Their men paid a terrible price.

Gallipoli From Above will rewrite the Gallipoli story by showing how the myth of bronzed ANZACs and blundering Brits has failed to do justice to the skills and innovation of the Australian leadership. This was the first chapter in the story of the Australian Army’s achievements in WW1, achievements that would give Australia confidence in itself, and the world confidence in Australia.
Accomplished writer and director Wain Fimeri returns with another extraordinary program. Wain’s work roams from dramatic screenwriting to factual documentary, and quite often, a bit of both. His consuming interest in people, history and stories, allows him to find the perfect balance of information and entertainment. He’s a writer and director of pioneering dramatized documentary, work that has resulted in prestigious acclaim from all over the world.

He is a Logie nominee and an AFI winner. He won the NSW Premier’s History Award, the Victorian Premiers Literary Award as well as the Manning Clark House National Cultural Group Award for making an outstanding contribution to the quality of Australian cultural life, and he’s won a Canadian Academy Award.

The Australian newspaper said, ‘Fimeri works with a poetic restraint. A complex, appropriately brooding meditation about nationhood, morality, loss and politics.’ Wain’s television feature Love Letters from a War was described by the Sydney Morning Herald as ‘stunning, illuminating and devastating’. It won the World Silver Medal for docudrama at the New York Festival. The Melbourne Sun said of his ground breaking documentary, Pozieres, ‘It is a masterpiece’. Wain has a number of feature films in development together with numerous documentary projects.
Anzac Day is the single most sacred and controversial day in the way Australians think about themselves. Commemoration of that day, April 25th, 1915, generally concentrates on the landing in the dawn. It is the reason we have a dawn service. That dawn turned into a terrible day that turned into a worse eight months of carnage that was the battle at Gallipoli. When it was over, it was time to wonder what it all meant, and what it could possibly have been worth? That question remains with us still, and that is in the end, maybe the most engaging thing about Gallipoli. There aren’t many questions that still beg an answer some one hundred years after they were asked.

Hugh Dolan has written a curious and terrific book that throws some pretty interesting light on the Anzac Landing and the Gallipoli campaign in general. There were many landings that day. Most of the landings were British soldiers. One landing, in a different place, was the Anzac soldiers. The general perception of the Anzac Landing is that it was a slaughter on a beach in the dawn, the wrong beach, planned by incompetent British Officers on a beach they knew nothing about. They sent us to die.

It turns out to be somewhat different. It wasn’t at dawn and it really wasn’t a slaughter. The landing was imaginatively planned by Australian officers. They put their men ashore with intelligence and stealth. By the standards of that terrible day at Gallipoli, it was a success.

Australian plans for the landing made use of aerial reconnaissance and espionage, and the phases of the moon, and a dozen other little details. It was a taut operation, modern in every respect. By contrast, the main British landings that same day, were mostly murderous slaughters.

*Gallipoli from Above* is about the events, the plans and the reasons behind the greatest seaborne invasion the world had yet seen; and the small beach that would be called Anzac Cove.

It was a pleasure to make. I felt that I was engaged in telling fresh and surprising stories about an event and a place long settled. It’s the story of how we came to be on that fateful beach on that fateful dawn, and will change the way you think about Anzac Day.

Wain Fimeri
About the Producer

John Moore has been producing award-winning documentaries for over twenty years. His programs have sold to ABC TV, SBS, Channel 4, ARTE, The History Channel and TV Ontario. His programs have won numerous awards in Australia and have been screened at several international festivals. In 2001 John produced and directed Thomson of Arnhem Land for Film Australia and the ABC. Thomson won the $15,000 NSW Premiers History Award, an AFI Award for Editing and was nominated for awards at Banff and Shanghai TV Festivals.

His 2005 documentary about Bertram Wainer, Abortion, Corruption & Cops was nominated at the 2005 Australian Film Institute (AFI) Awards and the 2006 Sydney Film Festival. John’s docu-dramas Menzies & Churchill at War and Monash - the Forgotten Anzac screened on the ABC to critical acclaim in October and November 2008. His most recent programs include The Trial (SBS) and Charles Bean’s Great War (The History Channel), both directed by Wain Fimeri.
PRODUCER’S STATEMENT

From my point of view as a producer, I am always looking for stories that are dramatic, important and that speak to what is special about being Australian. There are not many stories that fulfill this aim as completely as Gallipoli. In many ways it is the founding myth of Australia (and Turkish) nationhood. Many commentators have pointed out that while Australia was born in 1901, the country’s true psychological independence was only achieved at Gallipoli in 1915. The story of Gallipoli has been told many times and in many different ways but Gallipoli From Above is both a totally new perspective and a fundamental shift in our understanding of what went on there, shattering many of the myths including the one that it was a colossal failure. The image of larrikin Aussie Diggers being slaughtered on the altar of British incompetence is the dominant impression of the campaign for many Australians.

Hugh Dolan’s book 36 Days, on which Gallipoli From Above is based, dismantles many similar myths about Gallipoli and replaces them with a much more nuanced explanation that reveals the careful planning, strategic ingenuity and early adoption of technology by the Australian leadership.

Wain Fimeri was the logical person to make this film. He has a deep knowledge of the First World War and the sophisticated story telling skills to weave his way through the complexities while maximising the dramatic potential of the story.

We were also fortunate to have on board Savas Karakas as our Turkish consultant who has an extensive knowledge of the Gallipoli campaign having worked on numerous Turkish documentaries. He made use of his considerable negotiation skills to ensure that we had access to wherever we wanted to go on the Gallipoli peninsula.

The team that put it all together is one that has also worked with me on a number of historical docu-dramas. They are all experts in their field but they also have the ability to argue the editorial integrity of the story and to make a positive contribution to how it is told. Wain has made a fascinating documentary and one capable of rewriting the way we think about Gallipoli. Instead of focusing on the heroism of the ordinary soldier this story is about the independence, ingenuity and sophistication of the Australian leadership. It is the beginning of a story arc that leads inexorably to Monash and the important Australian victories in France during 1918.

In 12 months the program will be released on DVD and in 2014 it will be available for broadcast on free to air TV. Hopefully this film will stimulate discussion and contribute to debate as we approach the 100th anniversary of the Gallipoli landing in 2015. The screening on Foxtel brings an informed audience to the program, that is interested in the subject matter and engaged with the issues.

John Moore
About the Characters

William Bridges

William Bridges is the taciturn but brilliant commander of the 1st Australian Division. He is a demanding leader. He tests knowledge with short, sharp questions and sometimes walks away from officers in mid sentence. Bridges is responsible for the 1st Australian Division who will be the first ashore at Gallipoli. On the day of the landing Bridges is decisive. He is careless of his own safety, not because he is a veteran, but because he eschews all emotion. His hands are firmly clenched, and his nails bite into the palm of one hand. He is everywhere on the battlefield and gains grudging respect from his men. He dies on the 18th of May 1915 after being shot through the thigh by a Turkish sniper.

William Bridges is played by actor Nicholas Bell whose television and film credits are extensive both in Australia and abroad and who was the 2011 recipient of the Best Actor Award in a short film, Afterglow (dir: Nadine Garner) at the New York City International Film Festival.

Charles Samson

Charles Samson was the pugnacious and courageous commander of the newly formed Naval Air Wing. He pioneered the use of radio in directing the fire of battleships and in photo-reconnaissance. Samson flew many missions himself and on 25th April at Cape Helles he reported that “the sea was absolutely red with blood”. On the 27th of May Samson attacked the German submarine U-21 which had just sunk HMS Majestic; when he ran out of bombs he resorted to firing his rifle at it.

On another occasion, he bombed a Turkish staff car but only succeeded in breaking the windscreen. One of the occupants was Mustafa Kemal, the charismatic Turkish commander and later founder of the Turkish Republic. Samson survived the war and died of heart failure in 1931.

Charles Samson is played by actor/director Lee Mason. Lee is currently putting the finishing touches to his directorial debut KIN, a film which he has written and performs in. Soon Lee can be seen on stage in the production of The Girls In Grey, a play about World War 1 nurses opening on ANZAC Day for Theatreworks.
**GENERAL SIR IAN HAMILTON**

General Sir Ian Hamilton is a soldier and poet, chosen by Kitchener to take charge of the Dardanelles campaign. He is considered charming, erudite and kind. He appears frail yet is full of energy. He is twice recommended for the Victoria Cross. On the first occasion he is considered too young, and on the second too senior.

Charles Bean writes he has ‘a breadth of mind which the army in general does not possess.’ Hamilton is eventually replaced when the campaign bogs down. Writing in the introduction of his Gallipoli Diary, he comments: ‘There is nothing certain about war except that one side won’t win.’

Sir Ian Hamilton is played by actor/director Will Gluth. Will started his career as an actor in the inaugural Sydney production of *Godspell*. Since then he has appeared in many film and TV productions and has directed over 40 professional productions both here and overseas.

**CHARLES VILLIERS-STUART**

Major Charles Villiers-Stuart served on the NW Frontier with the 56th Punjab Rifles before being attached to the Anzac Corps as its chief intelligence officer. He was responsible for gathering information on the Turkish defences at Gallipoli. On the 14th of April with a pair of binoculars and a 1/40,000 scale map he made an aerial reconnaissance over ANZAC Cove. He was able to determine the strength and position of the Turkish forces on the ridges behind ANZAC Cove. At a subsequent intelligence briefing, Villiers-Stuart told his superiors that Hamilton’s assumptions about Z Beach being relatively unprotected were wrong. Villiers-Stuart landed early in the morning of the 25th of April and was responsible for deciding that the rest of the forces should land at Anzac Cove which was protected by the surrounding hills from shell fire. Villiers-Stuart was killed in action by shell fire at Courtney’s Post on 17 May 1915 aged 40.

Charles Villiers-Stuart is played by actor David Tredinnick whose career has encompassed both mainstream and fringe theatre, as well as numerous feature films, shorts and documentaries. David works regularly on radio features, voiceovers and book narrations.
German General Otto Liman von Sanders served as adviser and military commander to the Ottoman Empire. When he was put in charge of the defence of the Dardanelles he had just over a month to prepare. One of Liman’s best decisions during this time was to promote Mustafa Kemal (later known as Atatürk) to command the 19th division. Kemal’s division literally saved the day for the Turks. His troops occupied the ridge line above the ANZAC landing site, just as the ANZAC troops were moving up the slope themselves. Kemal recognized the danger and personally made sure his troops held the ridge line. They were never forced off despite constant attacks for the next five months. Liman von Sanders wrote a book about his experiences after the war.

Otto Liman von Sanders is played by actor and producer Eugene Schlusser. Eugene has had numerous acting credits in both Australian and overseas television and film productions as well as having produced a number of documentary films. Eugene is currently working on a film about William Dobell.

Harry Strain was a society lawyer who loved hunting, fishing and the opera in roughly that order. He was an excellent advocate and was one of the first people in Britain to get a pilot’s licence. He enlisted in the Royal Navy as a lieutenant and was assigned to HMS Ark Royal as an intelligence officer. The night before he left for Gallipoli he attended the opera at Covent Garden after which he caught the milk train to Plymouth where his wife farewelled him from the wharf in her opera gown. Strain was involved in a number of reconnaissance flights over the Gallipoli peninsula which were recorded in detail in his diary. He wrote three foolscap pages about the landing at Anzac Cove which he observed from the air before he was shot down. He landed safely in the sea and was rescued by a nearby picket boat. Strain survived the war and went back to being a lawyer.

Harry Strain is played by Drew Tingwell. A graduate from the Victorian College of the Arts, Drew has worked extensively as an actor, writer and director in Australia and overseas. He plays the principal role of David in the 2012 feature film Exit.
PRODUCTION STORY

In January 2012, armed with a mountain bike, a satchel of maps and a bundle of key source documents, our intrepid crew travelled to Turkey for two weeks of filming.

Much of this time was on location at the Gallipoli Peninsula. Filming took place at Anzac Cove, in the town of Canakkale, along the Dardanelles, at forts, beaches, museums and historical sites. Although it was January, mid-winter and freezing cold, the peninsula was empty of tourists and perfect for documentary filming. Our Turkish liaison person, Savas Karakas, was instrumental in organising permissions and access to all the important locations within the Gallipoli Peninsula National Park. The mutual interest in the Gallipoli campaign from both the Turkish and Australian members of the crew made filming in Turkey a productive and satisfying experience.

Aircraft reconnaissance was an essential part of the invasion planning, and showing the Gallipoli peninsula from the air was a challenge. One option was an expensive helicopter, but this presented too many limitations. Fortunately we found a Turkish aerial crew to operate a small remote controlled helicopter and camera. This team worked with their own crew for two days to cover many of the ‘essential’ sites on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

Returning to Australia in late January, the crew jumped immediately into planning a February drama shoot for all the historical re-enactments. In order to capture ‘Z Beach’ where the ANZAC soldiers landed, Point Addis beach on the south coast of Victoria was used as the location. The natural features of the beach worked well to simulate Z beach in Turkey. One tall precipice at Point Addis is very similar to that of the “Sphinx” at Gallipoli. Capturing the shot where Harry Strain falls from his plane and into the sea had both the director and crew in wetsuits in order to get the perfect shot.

Another challenge for the production was to show the aircraft reconnaissance - flights in a dramatic and realistic way. Fortunately we were able to use the Royal Australian Air Force Museum at Point Cook and two vintage aeroplanes from the era. Using green screen technology and a wind machine, the images captured were then given to John Francis from Surreal World who added the visual effects including clouds and sky. The resulting “flying” images were worth the hot and windy shoot day down at Point Cook.

To create the location of ANZAC headquarters on board the troop ship the SS Min-
newaska, we used the HMAS Castlemaine berthed in Williamstown. For three brilliant summer days, the cast and crew crammed the decks and below decks and cabins of the ship. The HMAS Castlemaine is a restored WWII warship, now a museum run by the Maritime Trust of Australia. Additional scenes were filmed around Williamstown, including the Town Hall and the Old Morgue.

For the trench scenes in Gallipoli, we were grateful again to be utilising an old quarry area on the pastoral property at Warrambeen where we filmed our previous production, Charles Bean’s Great War.

Throughout the drama shoot, our favourite production design team, Neil Angwin and Tim Burgin, were busy as usual creating wonderful period sets on a documentary budget. Costume Designer Jane Hyland brought her expert knowledge of period costume to the team and worked well with the many military costumes required.

The Australian Great War Association, a group dedicated to military re-enactment, were an essential component to our production, providing dressed extras and props during the shoot.
KEY CREDITS

Presented by
Writer and Director
Producer

Hugh Dolan
Wain Fimeri
John Moore

Based on the book 36 Days: The Untold Story Behind the Gallipoli Landings, by Hugh Dolan

Cast
Charles Villiers-Stuart
Harry Strain
Charles Samson
Ian Hamilton
William Bridges
Ewen Sinclair-MacLagan
Otto Liman von Sanders
Charles Bean
Clarence Palmer
Adil Shahin
William Tope
Frank Parker
Tom Usher
Bill De Saxe

David Tredinnick
Drew Tingwell
Lee Mason
Will Gluth
Nicholas Bell
Ian Bliss
Eugene Schlusser
Nick Farnell
Geordie Taylor
Ozan Sahin
Justin Batchelor
Nick Colla
Luke Alleva
Shaun Brown

Crew
Line Producer
Director of Photography
Editor
Composer
Visual Effects & Animation
Legals
Production Accounts

Lisa Horler
Jaems Grant ACS
Steven Robinson ASE
Dale Cornelius
John Francis Surreal World
Bryce Menzies
Noga Mizrahi

Drama Shoot
1st Assistant Director
Production Designer
Co-Production Designer
Sound Recordist
Make Up Department Head
Costume Designer
Gaffer
Camera Assistant
2nd Assistant Director
2nd Unit Director
Boom Operator
Unit Manager
Art Department Standby

Shannon Owen
Neil Angwin
Tim Burgin
Mark Tarpey
Helen Moran
Jane Hyland
Andrew Lock
Cameron Dunn
Julianne Deeb
Cam Eason
Adam Moore
Alice Molan
Tarquin Faggetter

SENSIBLEFILMS
Key Grip
Assistant Grip
Costume Assistant
Runner

Llew Higgins
Steve Robinson
Helen Croatto
Vincent Fimeri

Documentary Crew Turkey

Turkish Liaison
Director of Photography
Sound Recordist
Camera Assistant
Aerial Crew

Savas Karakas
Jaems Grant ACS
Oguz Kaynak
Kerem Arica
Cengiz & Tuna Bektas
Flying Cam

Post Production

Archive & Assembly Editor
Post Production Facility
Head of Post Production
Post Producer
Colourist
On Line Editor
Conform Editor
Quality Assurance
Sound Post Production
Sound Mixer
Score Recorded & Mixed at

Olivia Appleby
Digital Pictures Melbourne
Rachel Knowles
Haley Gillies
Deidre McClelland
Chris Dea
Laurie Meade
Peter Peric
Evenmore Media
Adam Moore
Score Studios

Archive Sources

Australian War Memorial
Imperial War Museum
Bundas Archive