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The British 1915 Dardanelles Joint Operation: Applying The Modern Australian Army's Battlespace Operating Systems Metrics to Explain Defeat

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Abstract

The 1915 Dardanelles Allied joint operation is widely regarded as an operational and tactical failure overlaid on the unstable foundation of poorly formulated strategy. At the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war, the campaign can be viewed as the corresponding failure of 'ends, ways, and means'. This article will focus principally on the 'ways' and 'means' employed by the British in 1915 but will take a completely novel approach by applying modern-day Australian Army Battlespace Operating Systems metrics to inform and clarify just how the 'means' were deficient. Although this may seem a somewhat risky

*1 *The author would like to express his appreciation to Dr Ian Speller, Maynooth University, and Congressman Paul Mc Hale, former US Marines Colonel and US Assistant Secretary for Defense, for their generous advice in the preparation of this article.*

proposition, this article will demonstrate that, despite their current use, these metrics were as valid in 1915 as they are today.

Keywords: joint operations, amphibious operations, Dardanelles campaign, battlespace operating systems

Introduction

The landing on the Dardanelles peninsula by an Allied ² expeditionary force in April 1915 followed a series of unsuccessful naval operations to ‘force the Dardanelles’ employing assault by (naval) gunfire. By somehow overpowering the shore artillery, ‘forcing the Dardanelles’ and sailing to Constantinople, the underlying (and flawed) assumption of the Allies was that, with their capital under the guns of the Anglo-French fleet, the Ottoman Turks would simply give up and surrender. Within the ultra-short six-week period of 18 March and 25 April 1915, an entire corps-level ‘supplementary land operation’³, utilising whatever forces were available at that time, was conceived, planned, and executed from scratch. The resulting land campaign commenced on

² The 1915 Dardanelles campaign was a multinational operation comprising troops from Great Britain, its Empire, its Commonwealth, and France. Most French troops were from African colonial territories.

³ Robin Prior, *Gallipoli: The End of The Myth*, (Yale 2009) p 68.

25 April 1915 with a joint operation in the shape of a ‘forced-entry’ amphibious assault across the entire Gallipoli peninsula. The initial landings completely failed to achieve their designated day one objectives and were followed by months of static trench warfare punctuated by several offensives attempting to break the stalemate, including a second amphibious assault at Suvla Bay in August. Following Kitchener’s inspection of the Dardanelles front in October 1915, the decision was taken on the 8th of December 1915 by the War Committee⁴ to evacuate the Peninsula.⁵ From late 1915 to early 1916, a further series of joint operations in the form of sequential amphibious withdrawals ended the campaign.

This article proposes that the Dardanelles campaign can be thought of as a land campaign punctuated by three joint operations occurring at its beginning, the middle, and the end. These amphibious operations and be considered the most ‘joint’ parts of the campaign. Although the Allied forces were totally dependent on sea lines of communication for movement and sustainment, this article argues that the Dardanelles Campaign was primarily a land operation, to be considered in much the same way as the Crimea campaign some sixty years previous.⁶ Of

⁴ Previously known as the ‘Dardanelles Committee

⁵ *Ibid*: p220.

⁶ The Crimean Peninsula campaign was similarly sustained entirely by sea but is not generally considered a ‘joint’ campaign by historians.

the three truly ‘joint’ operations occurring in this period, only the amphibious withdrawals of 1915-16, could be considered as ‘successes. However, to quote Churchill’s comments on a later successful amphibious withdrawal 25 years later: ‘wars are not won by evacuations.’⁷ The 1915 Dardanelles offensive is widely regarded as one of the Allies’ major First World War operational failures.

An Overview

First, this article will discuss the Dardanelles offensive employing the ‘ends, ways, and means’ conceptual framework. Briefly summarised, ‘ends’ equate to the strategic level of the campaign and are primarily concerned with ultimate strategic aims and goals. ‘Ways’ are related to operational level considerations such as joint operational doctrine, as it existed in 1915. ‘Means’ relate primarily to operational-tactical level battlespace enablers (artillery, infantry, etc) which the 1915 commander would need to apply to achieve the desired outcome. Whilst the majority of these effects are kinetic in nature, this is not exclusively so, as non-kinetic enablers in the form of combat service support and logistics were crucial in 1915 and remain so to the present day.

Whilst this article will comment briefly on the strategic elements (‘the ends’) of the campaign, it will focus principally on both the ‘ways’ of the

⁷ Speech to the House of Commons, 4 June 1940.

campaign, making particular reference to the state of British ⁸ joint operational doctrine in 1915, highlighting the ‘means’ employed during the campaign. A principal argument presented here is that the disaster in the Dardanelles represented a general systems failure in British operations. This not only manifested as critical deficiencies in the ‘ends’ (strategic level of war) and ‘ways’ (operational level of war) employed by the British, but particularly that the 1915 campaign was lost at the level of the ‘means’ that were brought to bear, that is, at the tactical level of kinetic effects and application of combat power.

The analysis presented here will take the unconventional approach of applying the effects framework used by the contemporary Australian Army in a ‘retrograde’ manner to the Dardanelles context, to inform the reader as to the challenges faced by 1915 commanders. This framework is known as the ‘Battlespace Operating System (BOS)’. The BOS categorises available battlespace effects available to current Australian operational-level land domain commanders into eight distinct ‘effects systems’. These are then applied in the battlespace usually in concert, reflecting modern combined arms warfare, to create the desired outcome. It will be clear to the reader at this point that to apply a 21st century framework to a campaign that occurred over a century ago would

⁸ Acknowledging the multinational nature of the forces, from this point on, the article will refer exclusively and specifically to British forces.

appear to be a risky approach indeed, however, this article will show that not only is this a valid approach but represents an ongoing link between the choices facing both the operational commander of 1915 and today.

‘Ends’ ‘Ways’, and ‘Means’

The identification, integration, and application of the ‘ends, ways, and ‘means’ framework is widely taught as one of the most fundamental requirements for strategic, operational, and tactical success.⁹ ‘Ends’, ‘ways’ and ‘means’ can be considered respectively as synonyms for clear strategic intent, operational methodology, and the tactical application of the joint functions available to the Commander at that particular time and place. ‘Ends, ways, and means’ are defined as:

Ends. The desired endstate and operational level objectives to be achieved

Means. The capabilities and resources required to achieve the objectives.

Ways. The order and sequence of actions that lead to the fulfilment of the operational objectives.¹⁰

⁹ NATO, Allied Joint Publication Number 3 (AJP 3), *Allied Joint Doctrine for the Conduct of Operations*, Edition C, Version 1, Feb 2019, section 1.61.

¹⁰ Land Warfare Centre, Land Warfare Doctrine 3-0 (LWD 3-0), *Operations*, Land Doctrine Centre, (Puckapunyal 2018), p 18.

This discussion focusses on the operational and tactical levels of war. These are further described in terms of ‘operational art’, which is defined as a specifically military activity that ‘...facilitates the skilful employment of a force to attain military goals through the design, sequencing, and ongoing development of operations...’¹¹ The key to this process being:

the capacity of the force to achieve this outcome through military action. There is, therefore, an integrated...relationship between the capabilities available to the commander, and the tactics and tasks they will employ to achieve the desired objectives ¹²

The Ends: A Brief Note on British Strategic Incoherence

The complex web of strategic and operational failures underlying the disaster in the Dardanelles has been well described by many previous accounts. The details of strategic level issues will not be discussed in detail here, however what will be kept foremost is the notion that British lack of strategic clarity was a principal cause of defeat.

¹¹ *Ibid* p17.

¹² *Ibid*. LWD 3-0, p 18.

The Ways: Poorly Developed Doctrine Combined with an Ambitious Plan

Following the failure of the naval assaults, British military planners had decided that the ‘way’ to achieve the campaign’s goals (‘the ends’) would be via a joint operation. In this article, the term ‘joint operations’ will be taken here to mean those conducted by land and sea forces in concert, (with what air assets present during the campaign having limited overall effect) In addition, throughout this article the terms ‘joint operation’ and ‘amphibious’ operation’ will be used interchangeably.

Amphibious Operations

Australian Defence Force (ADF) doctrine defines an amphibious operation as:

An operation launched from sea by a naval and landing force embarked in ships or craft, with the principle (*sic*) purpose of projecting the landing force ashore tactically into an environment ranging from uncertain to hostile ¹³

¹³ Joint Doctrine Directorate, Australian Defence Doctrine Publication 3.2 (ADDP 3.2). *Amphibious Operations*, 4th ed, (Canberra 2019), pp1-3.

Australian Defence Force (ADF) Defence Doctrine Publication 3.2 (ADDP 3.2). ‘*Amphibious Operations*’ further describes four categories of amphibious operation:

Amphibious demonstrations can support shaping for amphibious and broader operations. They must be sufficiently realistic to force an adversary to commit resources to deal with the perceived threat.

Amphibious raids are limited by time and space. A raid includes a planned withdrawal of the landing force.

Amphibious assault is a decisive action to achieve objectives involving a degree of permanency on an uncertain or hostile shore.

Ship to objective manoeuvre is used to land forces at points of adversary weakness.

Amphibious withdrawal is the principal means of reconstituting an amphibious task force. The withdrawal must be planned in detail, including the time and place for re-embarkation ¹⁴

All four types of amphibious operations described above were undertaken during the 1915 Dardanelles campaign. In addition to the main amphibious ‘forced entry’ assault of 25th April 1915, these included the amphibious

¹⁴ Joint Doctrine Directorate, Australian Defence Doctrine Publication 3.2 (ADDP 3.2). *Amphibious Operations*, 4th ed, (Canberra 2019, p 4-0.

demonstrations at Bulair and Besiker Bay, the initial amphibious raid of the French landing at Kum Kale, and the amphibious withdrawals in the period November 1915-January 1916.

Pre-war British Joint Operations Doctrine: Small and Poor Means

In 1915, British amphibious doctrine consisted of a single seventy-two-page document, *'The Manual of Joint Operations'* which had been issued by the War Office in 1913. This was intended

as a best-practice guide for conducting landing operations, since before the First World War. Early versions were quite basic and focused heavily on rules rather than tactics. The 1911 manual, for example, instructed soldiers to remain orderly seated in the landing boats until given permission to disembark by the naval officer in command. A 1913 revision removed most of the worst rules reminiscent of former eras, but unfortunately some of the new guidelines were ignored during the Gallipoli campaign, at great cost.

Notably, the emphasis on quickly seizing locations where defenders could fire down on the landing beaches^{15 16}

This 1913 publication is notable for its brevity, indicating that British joint operations doctrine in 1913 was somewhat underdeveloped and incomplete. With the notable exception of limited activity by the Royal Marines this was the sum of it.¹⁷ This was indeed ‘small and poor’ joint amphibious operations doctrine, and points towards an inadequate base of both field-knowledge and practice. Notwithstanding the lack of both doctrine and practice in 1915, however, many in the British military establishment understood all too well that an opposed amphibious landing at Gallipoli was a risky proposition indeed. This had been foreshadowed by a 1906 memorandum of the Admiralty General Staff committee expressing serious doubts as to the viability of an opposed landing at the Dardanelles. Comments made by certain senior British officers prior to the landings further evidence this.^{18 19} Thus, in the minds of some- but by no means

¹⁵ Matthew Heaslip, ‘Britain’s Armed Forces and Amphibious Operations in Peace and War 1919–1939: A Gallipoli Curse’, in *Journal of Strategic Studies* 2019. DOI: [10.1080/01402390.2019.1570145](https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2019.1570145)

¹⁶ The original reference is: The War Office ‘*Manual of Combined Naval and Military Operations*’, HMSO (London 1913), Chapter VII ‘The Landing’, Paragraph 51, pp 29-30.

¹⁷ Matthew S Seligmann, ‘The Special Service Squadron of the Royal Marines: The Royal Navy and Organic Amphibious Warfare Capability before 1914’, in *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Sept 2020, pp 1-21. DOI: [10.1080/01402390.2020.1816972](https://doi.org/10.1080/01402390.2020.1816972)

¹⁸ David French, ‘The Origins of the Dardanelles Campaign Reconsidered’, from *History*, vol. 68, no. 223, 1983, via *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/24418563. Accessed 17 Oct 2020.p 211.

¹⁹ The Dardanelles Commission, Final Report of the Dardanelles Commission, Part II, *Conduct of Operations*, HMSO (London, 1919) , p 84.

all-in the British military prior to the Dardanelles Campaign, there were no illusions about the challenges that would be faced in employing the ‘ways’ represented by a major joint operation that was centred around a ‘forced entry’ amphibious landing.²⁰

Despite prominent objections to the joint operation set against recent supporting documentation (as referenced above), the fact that the operation went ahead in the face of advice and documentation to the contrary, remains one of the great paradoxes of the Dardanelles Campaign. The underlying reasons are complex, and are linked to the web of conflicting opinions, perceptions, and agendas that were driven from every side of the Dardanelles Committee, the politico-military steering group which had been established to ‘mastermind’ the operation.²¹

A further deficit in the British practice of joint operations in 1915 lay in the disconnect between the ‘ways’ that had been decided upon and the ‘means’ that would be required to achieve the campaign’s desired operational goals. Success in the complex and difficult battlespace of an amphibious operation necessitated not only right doctrine and practice, but also a host of technological

²⁰ For recent USMC doctrine, see: Chairman of the (US) Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-18, *Joint Forcible Entry Operations*, validated 27 Jun 2018

²¹ For a succinct account, the reader is referred to: Robin Prior, *Gallipoli: The End of The Myth*, (Yale 2009). Especially Chapter 5: ‘No Going Back’, pp 60-71.

enablers which were unavailable in 1915.²² In 1915, the ‘means’ of British tactical military capability were insufficient, and simply unable to generate the battlespace effects needed for military operations in a littoral environment. This was not so much a failure of British amphibious doctrine to bridge the gap between intent, execution, and success (although these deficiencies were significant contributors), but a lack of intrinsic combat capability that was required to be brought to bear effectively at the point of contact.

The Means

A major contention presented here is that the *scope* of battlespace effects available to a land commander in 2021 compared to 1915 remains essentially unchanged. ‘Scope’ refers to the generic range of battlespace effects. For example, direct fire artillery is as available today as it was in 1915. So too, are combat engineers on the battlefield. Whilst the essential core scope of these effects remains unchanged since the early 20th century, on the other hand the *scale* of those effects has changed considerably. Taking target acquisition as one example of ‘scale’, the ability to strike distant targets using precision fires as part of exquisite kill chains has developed considerably in the century since 1915.

²² Strictly speaking this may be inaccurate: a system of landing craft had already been initiated, but for a proposed amphibious operation in the Baltics. British inter-service barriers, together with the limited operational preparation times, preventing the use of these assets during the campaign.

Any assessment of 1915 scale using 2021 criteria in this instance would be truly invalid, however this is a difference of ‘scale’, and not of ‘scope’. Fire support in the form of artillery requiring target acquisition is a Battlespace Operating System (BOS) that was present both in 1915 and continues today. The scope of artillery remains, for all intents and purposes, unchanged: the targeting cycle progresses from targets being struck after having first been acquired. Once battle damage assessment has occurred, the cycle is reset and continues. However, unlike scope, the scale of artillery in 2021, has changed significantly, with both target acquisition and precision strike many times more comprehensive and accurate than in 1915. The persistence of artillery on the modern battlefield allows the present-day commentator to utilise the ‘Fire Support BOS’ as a means of analysing the 1915 counterpart’s options and to better understand both the dilemmas and tactical deficits that were confronted. Thus, notwithstanding the obvious differences in situation, technology, and relative capability overlaid by the effects of time and space, this article holds that British commanders of 1915 employed virtually the same set (‘scope’) of enablers to generate the battlespace effects needed to achieve the desired result, albeit of a lesser technological standard. These ‘enablers’ are represented by the BOS and will now be discussed.

Battlespace Operating Systems Produce Battlefield Effects

In 1915, both the British Army and Royal Navy lacked the specialist knowledge, experience, and equipment necessary to conduct successful amphibious warfare. During the Dardanelles campaign these deficiencies manifested as critical failures in virtually every essential component required for joint operational success. Such ‘essential components’ were the products of higher, strategic-level inputs such as doctrine, organisation, training, materiel, personnel, facilities, leadership, and interoperability. These are today referred to collectively as the ‘Fundamental Inputs to Capability’.²³ In 2021 these inputs remain the same and continue to be responsible for the resultant enablers producing battlespace combat effects. Current Australian Defence Force (ADF) doctrine classifies these ‘enablers’ into eight distinct groupings, known collectively as ‘Battlespace Operating Systems’, abbreviated in this article as the ‘BOS’.²⁴ In current Australian Army doctrine, BOS are defined as:

The combination of personnel, collective training, major systems, supplies, facilities, and command and management organised,

²³ Australian Defence Doctrine Publication 0.02 (ADDP 0.02), *Preparedness and Mobilisation*, (Canberra 2013), pp 3-4 to 3-7.

²⁴ ‘Battlespace Operating Systems’ are listed and discussed in Land Warfare Doctrine, (LWD 5-1-4), *The Military Appreciation Process*’ Australian Army Land Doctrine Centre, (Puckapunyal 2015), p 8-1

supported, and employed to perform a designated function as part of a whole.²⁵

Each Battlespace Operating System represents a discrete component of the resultant combat power required to achieve the desired operational effect. BOS may also be thought of as the ‘building blocks’ of tactical military action. Australian military doctrine holds that joint operational effects are achieved through the integration, orchestration, and application of these eight ‘Battlespace Operating Systems (BOS)’. The BOS not only provide direct kinetic effects (for example artillery, which sits within the ‘Fire Support’ BOS grouping), or infantry, (which is a key component of the Manoeuvre BOS), but also combat support (i.e., military engineering being a major part of the Mobility and Survivability BOS) as well as logistics (being a major component of the Combat Service Support BOS). These eight Battlespace Operating Systems are:

The Manoeuvre BOS

The Fire Support BOS

The Information Operations BOS

The Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance BOS

The Mobility and Survivability BOS

The Air Defence BOS

²⁵ *Ibid.* (LWD 5-1-4), *The Military Appreciation Process*.

The Command-and-Control BOS

The Combat Service Support BOS ²⁶

Illustrating the point made above that each BOS ‘...represents a distinct component of the resultant combat power required to achieve the desired operational effect...’. An example of the Fire Support BOS is field artillery, which is a combat enabling element used to strike targets which have previously been identified, acquiring, and registered. The Fire Support BOS (in the form of field artillery) is able to create a number of outcomes (or ‘battlespace effects’) which include the direct suppression and destruction of enemy forces as well as the interdiction of their freedom of movement if lines of communication are additionally targeted. These effects once generated can facilitate the further employment of other BOS enablers. For example, armour (part of the Manoeuvre BOS) can be applied after artillery strike to exploit any vulnerabilities created. In summary, Battlespace Operating Systems (BOS) can be described as the operational products of the strategic level ‘fundamental inputs to capability ‘employed tactically by a commander to produce the desired effects in the battlespace.

²⁶ Land Warfare Doctrine, (LWD 5-1-4) ,*The Military Appreciation Process*, Australian Army Land Doctrine Centre, (Puckapunyal 2015), p 8-1.

Applying a Battlespace Operating Systems (BOS) Metric

In summary, whilst the Australian Army's BOS are acknowledged as a modern concept, the argument presented here holds that they nevertheless continue to equate to the scope of battlespace options available to 1915 British commanders. Whilst the 'scale' of effects has changed radically, 'scope' has not, and the BOS can still be validly applied. Each Battlespace Operating Systems as applied in 1915 will now be analysed using the eight contemporary BOS categories.

The Air Defence BOS

Air defence was itself in very early development in 1915, mirroring the corresponding appearance development of airpower. The Air Defence BOS will not be discussed further in this article.

The Manoeuvre BOS

The Manoeuvre Battlespace Operating System comprises all the elements moved around the battlespace to gain tactical advantage. The archetypal manoeuvre enabler are armoured forces. Infantry is also considered an important component of this BOS, indicating that the use of the word 'manoeuvre' in this context is not a synonym for vehicular or other mechanised movement.

The initial amphibious landings of 25 April 1915 were extremely restricted: there are additional challenges to manoeuvre that must begin from a boat rowed to shore. The need to break out of a narrow beachhead was not universally appreciated and coupled with the lack of specialised landing craft ²⁷ or other mission-essential equipment required to enable a successful amphibious landing, exacerbated the already critical deficits in execution. The difficulties encountered during the amphibious assaults, representing the most ‘joint’ parts of the Dardanelles campaign, were considerable and were not really solved until the 1940’s with the creation of specialised amphibious craft, particularly armoured vehicles which could apply direct suppressive fire at the critical point of close combat.

Within days after the initial landings, the tactical situation at the Dardanelles had degenerated into static positional warfare. In the Australian Division sector, all movement was severely restrained by adverse terrain comprising near vertical cliffs and deep gullies. In the gentler terrain of the Helles sector, mobility obstacles and multiple killing zones predominated, the latter projecting fire over flat terrain, less restricted by line-of-sight considerations. By contrast, most land tactical movement was severely restricted, limiting the application of the Manoeuvre BOS. Gallipoli presented local commanders with

²⁷ But see footnote 17.

the prime tactical First World War dilemma of how to cross a no man's land 'swept by fire'. Future technological (i.e., gas, tanks) and tactical attempts (i.e., the 'creeping barrage', 1918 German '*stosstruppen*' infiltration tactics, combined arms theory) at a solution remained to be developed in 1915.²⁸ With only limited manoeuvre options and capability, the campaign degenerated into static, trench warfare despite multiple Allied attempts to break the deadlock.

The Fire Support BOS

The Fire Support BOS includes all assets which exert their effects over varying distances, both directly and indirectly. The Fire Support Battlespace Operating System during the Dardanelles campaign was both land and sea based. Naval gunfire support proved overall to be inconsistent due to a number of factors. These included the preponderance of pre-dreadnought battleships in the supporting fleet which lacked modern fire control systems and with armament suitable for engaging other (armoured) ships utilising flat trajectory gunnery. Pre-dreadnought main guns with limited elevation were unable to provide the high angled trajectories necessary for both effective infantry fire support and the reduction of enemy improved positions.²⁹ Notwithstanding the general comments

²⁸ Michael Evans, 'From Legend to Learning: Gallipoli and the Military Revolution of World War', Land Warfare Studies Centre, *Working Paper 110*, (Puckapunyal, 2000).

²⁹ Robin Prior, *Gallipoli: The End of The Myth*, (Yale, 2009).

above, naval gunfire proved to be effective at X, S, and Y Beach at Helles, however these positions remained tactically unexploited, opportunity squandered by both command failure and lack of initiative. These factors represented deficiencies in other Battlespace Operating systems, such as the Command-and-Control BOS, discussed below.³⁰

Land-based 1915 British Fire Support BOS suffered from a shortage of both field artillery and ammunition. This BOS also lacked the fire procedures such as ‘creeping’ barrages and counter-battery fires, which would provide more effective support for attacks later in the War. Deficiencies in both land and naval-based fire support, particularly in the Helles sector, doomed successive frontal infantry assaults to failure throughout the campaign.

The Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) BOS

The ISTAR BOS includes all the components required to exercise the intelligence function as well as provide the specialised role of targeting and scouting. In 1915, most reconnaissance was limited to ground line of sight means, with aircraft only just beginning to enter operations. When compared to 1915, the scale of reconnaissance that is possible today has increased substantially and

³⁰ Robert Rhodes-James, *Gallipoli*, (Papermac,1989), pp 116-117.

includes a range of capabilities distributed throughout the electromagnetic spectrum which have only been available since the late-20th century. Nevertheless, whilst the ‘scale’ of ISTAR has changed, its ‘scope’ remains the same as it was in 1915.

The intelligence deficiencies on display before and during the Dardanelles Campaign, which included poor to no integration of pre-war intelligence reporting have been previously well documented.³¹ The haste to deploy land forces to the peninsula in the wake of the abandonment of the naval campaign resulted in a poorly conducted intelligence preparation of the battlespace prior to the landings. Crucially reliable intelligence about the character, numbers, and dispositions of Ottoman forces was lacking.³² Well-documented British *hubris* in the form of racially based generalisations about the quality of Ottoman troops also fuelled British misconceptions.³³ Churchill’s own remarks to the Dardanelles commission on the poor performance of Ottoman troops to a minor landing at Alexandretta early in that year reflected these sentiments.³⁴

³¹ Michael Evans, ‘From Legend to Learning: Gallipoli and the Military Revolution of World War’, Land Warfare Studies Centre, *Working Paper 110*, (Puckapunyal, 2000).

³² See: Robert Rhodes-James, *Gallipoli*, (Papermac,1989).

³³ See: Robert Rhodes-James, *Gallipoli*, (Papermac,1989), p 98.

³⁴ Dardanelles Commission, Final Report of the Dardanelles Commission, Part II, *Conduct of Operations*, HMSO (London, 1919).

British naval target acquisition was inconsistent during the campaign and although surveillance was conducted by ship-borne naval aircraft, primitive communications significantly reduced the ‘real time’ value of many reconnaissance reports. 1915 British information loops (as described by the Target acquisition> Targeting> Striking>Battle Damage Assessment descriptive cycle) failed to be sufficiently responsive enough to be effective during the campaign.

The current practice of Information Operations is included in the ISTAR BOS and emphasises non-kinetic means to target the enemy’s will to fight. Information Operations encompasses contemporary activities such as Strategic Communications, electronic Warfare, Military Public Affairs, and cyberwarfare.³⁵ It could be argued that before the campaign, the British effectively fell victim to a self-generated ‘information operation’ of their own making, allowing themselves to be convinced by *hubris*, prejudice, and preconceptions that Ottoman forces would not put up a first-class defence.

The Mobility and Survivability BOS

³⁵ Australian Defence Force Publication 3.13.1 (ADFP 3.13.1) , *Information Operations Procedures*, (Canberra 2016).

The Mobility and Survivability Battlespace Operating System includes mission-critical military engineering tasks such as field demolitions, obstacle breaching, and the creation and hardening of improved positions. During the campaign, the Mobility and Survivability BOS also included the considerable tunnelling activities which occurred throughout the campaign. This occurred primarily in the Australian sector where the terrain and soil consistency facilitated tunnelling as a means of bridging ‘no mans’ land’. However, mining operations during the Dardanelles Campaign, were more limited compared to those undertaken later in the war on the Western Front and did not create the sought-after decisive breakthrough.³⁶

The Combat Service Support BOS

The Combat Service Support (CSS) Battlespace Operating System includes all the vital sustainment functions. CSS is a mission critical military activity that encompasses a wide range of activities, including movement of supplies, reception, staging and on-forwarding of materiel and personnel, medical support, water supply, catering, and personnel functions (such as pay, welfare, and postal services). The conduct of the campaign was affected by

³⁶ See talk by Dr Peter Doyle, ‘The Challenge of Tunnelling at Gallipoli’, talk given at the Western Front Association, 5 Sept 2020. Accessed on 2 Nov 2020 via: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=baFzxSifDio>

critical deficiencies in logistics capabilities amongst which were lack of force health protection, lack of water, poor to non-existent dental care, and poor diet.

³⁷ Of note was the complete breakdown in casualty evacuation during the initial phases of the Gallipoli campaign. This was due not only to hasty and incomplete preparation of the health services, which reflected the rushed state of pre-deployment operational planning, but also to the lack of reliable battle casualty estimators and experience.

The Command and Control (C2) BOS

The C2 BOS, includes the critical factors of command, leadership, and management necessary for mission success. Joint operations by their nature impose more stringent conditions for success. According to the capstone Australian Defence Force doctrine ADDP 3.2 *Amphibious Operations*: ‘...Amphibious operations present unique command and control challenges, with joint and single-Service influences on command arrangements’.³⁸

³⁷ Nick Wilson, Nhung Nghiem, Jennifer A Summers, Mary-Ann Carter, Glyn Harper, ‘A Nutritional Analysis of New Zealand Military Food Rations at Gallipoli in 1915: Likely Contribution to Scurvy and other Nutrient Deficiency Disorders’, in *The New Zealand Medical Journal*, 19 April 2013, Vol 126, No 13.

³⁸ Joint Doctrine Directorate, Australian Defence Doctrine Publication 3.2 (ADDP 3.2). *Amphibious Operations*, 4th ed , (Canberra 2019),, pp 3-to 3-3.

Current ADF joint operations doctrine mandates placing all components of an amphibious, joint task force under a single, clearly designated, joint task force commander. It also emphasises the correct application of the principles of mission command³⁹, which assumes an even greater importance in the complex, multi-domain tactical situations to be encountered in amphibious operations.⁴⁰ Modern amphibious operations also mandate the presence of a dedicated command ship. Unfortunately, this was not the case in 1915 with Hamilton utilising inadequate space and resources for his command staff onboard HMS Queen Elizabeth.⁴¹

Hamilton's personal command style reflected many aspects of the 1915 British Command and Control Battlespace Operating System which failed at multiple levels when subjected to such a demanding operation. Travers has described the First World War 'systems' failure in British command, and amongst other factors highlights the deficiencies of this Edwardian system of personal command, its reflection in the British promotion system, the under-development of the British general staff officer system, a misunderstanding of the true nature of delegation of command, and systemic blockages to inter-service

³⁹ Land Warfare Doctrine 0-0 (LWD 0-0) *Command, Leadership, and Management*, (Puckapunyal, 2008), pp 2-3 to 2-4.

⁴⁰ Ian Speller, 'Command and Control in Amphibious Operations: The Lessons of History' in *Revista Da Escola De Guerra Naval*, 25 (3), Sep-Dec 2019, pp 561-586. Retrieved from <https://www-proquest-com.jproxy.nuim.ie/docview/2395367424?accountid=12309>.

⁴¹ Robert Rhodes-James, *Gallipoli*, (Papermac 1989), p 92.

interoperability.⁴²These factors were displayed prominently during the Dardanelles campaign.

Conclusion

Even from before its execution on 25 April 1915, the Dardanelles joint operation was already fatally compromised by the flawed strategy that comprised its 'ends'. The operation exposed the inadequacy of the 'ways' that had been decided upon (a joint operation in the form of an opposed amphibious landing), and the 'means' that were available at the time. When these 1915 Battlespace Operating Systems 'means' were hastily assembled following the aborted naval campaign, applied according to a rushed and incomplete operational planning process, and then deployed collectively in the form of a joint amphibious operation in a highly complex geo-tactical situation, the resultant collective 'systems failure' exposed the parlous state of British joint operations at that time. This article's principal argument has been that the 'ways' of British joint operations in 1915 was poor to begin with and on this foundation (or rather, lack of thereof), the operational 'means' of 1915 British Battlespace Operating Systems were revealed to be globally deficient, with the joint operation exposing its critical deficiencies. To borrow a phrase from modern risk management

⁴² Timothy Travers, 'The Hidden Army: Structural Problems in the British Officer Corps, 1900-1918', in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 17, No. 3 (Jul 1982).

theory, a principal ‘root cause’ of defeat in 1915 lay in the inability of British Battlespace Operating Systems to generate the required tactical-level battlespace effects required for battlefield success. This article has argued that the 21st century Australian Army concept of Battlespace Operating Systems can be applied in a careful and considered analysis of available 1915 British Army battlefield ‘means’, showing that whilst the scale of battlespace effects has been radically transformed in the past century, the scope of battlespace effects has not. Finally, the nature of war is unchanged: Clausewitz’s chaotic ‘eternal trinity’ of violence, uncertainty, and the exercise of political will remains the same whether in 2021 or 1915.⁴³

⁴³ Brian Cole, ‘Clausewitz’s Wondrous Yet Paradoxical Trinity: The Nature of War as a Complex Adaptive System’, *Joint Force Quarterly*, 2020, Issue 96, pp 42-49.