



Exercise Eagle Tour 2011

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“Soldiers seem always to be needed when diplomacy fails”. This was certainly true in Asia Minor in 1914 for Gallipoli campaign that remains among the most contentious episodes of WWI history, where United Kingdom – France led forces fought versus tenacious and enduring Turkish supported by Germany. At the very beginning of the campaign the main Allied intention was to force open a warm water passage to Russia through the Dardanelles and the Constantinople conquest, but very soon the expeditionary operation developed into a ruinous trench warfare.

Its visionary origins, its tragic course and the dramatic ending all give the power to stimulate conflicting arguments. Gallipoli has always been interpreted in national terms, with of course different story description covering what the belligerent nations have decided to emphasize. This year NRDC Italy battlefield tour (Exercise Eagle Tour 2011 – Ex ET 2011) has been organized on the Gallipoli

peninsula to study on site, with an aseptic modus operandi, the campaign in order to prepare NRDC-ITA key leaders and Senior National Representatives to conduct large-scale operation, train them in decision making process and to upswing team building within the participants.

The exercise was organized by Engineer Branch and G8 Purchase & Contract, with the support of the Senior Turkish Representative.

The exercise was launched on March the 31st with a historical introduction and a specific lecture run by Professor Stephen Prince to provide the participants with a first flavor of the historical facts.

The real tour started on May the 09th , with a charter flight to Cannakale (on the Turkish Asian side) from Malpensa. From Cannakale airport the delegation moved by bus to the Hellenic town of Troy where they had the possibility to visit the famous ruins of the different “Troy” from Bronze age till Roman empire period. Through the centuries, Troy had a strategic importance, because of its position on



The organizing team, from left Maj. Gatto, Col. Stella, Lt.Col. Tempesta and Lt.Col. Belogi

the Dardanelle strait between Europe and Asia.

The second day, after an overnight rest on the Asian cost the delegation by ferryboat landed at Eceabat, on the European Gallipoli peninsula, to study the events related to the Cape Hellas battle area. At Eceabat, the delegation stopped in front of the model showing the overall area of the campaign where the two accompanying historians, Professor Prince for the Allied side and Dr. Yildirim for the Turkish side. They introduced the sea battle and gave the audience the first overview on the entire Campaign. The sea battle was also analyzed at the war museum located in the Tabyasi Naval Battery where a historical movie showed the heroic acts of both belligerents. On the way to Cape Hellas, among the different historical stands, the delegation had the opportunity to pay respect to the thousands of French and

From the Staff



A static display at Kilitbahir



The French cemetery

Commonwealth fallen during the battles with two simple ceremonies at the France War Cemetery of Gallipoli, that overlook Morto Bay on the Southern part of the promontory, and to the Commonwealth memorial stands on the tip of the Gallipoli Peninsula. The obelisk over 30 m can be seen by all ships passing through the Dardanelles and it is the memorial for the men who fell during the campaign or were lost in the sea.

On the memorial there are reported all the names of the ships and the Army formations that took part to the campaign. The French took part to the campaign with the “Corps Expéditionnaire d’Orient”. That was responsible for the right section of the Allied line at Kereves Dere, a deep gully about one kilometer north where is now located the Turkish memorial.

After these touching ceremonies the group moved to the Turkish Memorial highs, higher 42 metres, that commemorates all the Turkish soldiers died during the battle of Canakkale. There,

one placard reports what Atatürk said about the 57th Regiment: “this is a famous regiment, because all of them were killed”. Unbelievable but true! From the memorial is possible to have a tremendous view on Kumkale Cape on the Asian side and on S beach.

From here, the group moved through W beach, also known as 1st Lancashire Landing, Y beach and Gully beach. At these three stands the audience had the opportunity to appreciate some military constructions, such as piers and water cisterns used

during the landing.

The day after, the focus was on the ANZAC (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) area of operation, (photo ANZAC) starting from ANZAC cove. During Gallipoli campaign there was no better known place than ANZAC Cove, since more than 27000 Australians, New Zealanders and Indians were put ashore in ANZAC cove between 25 April and 01 May 1915

For this reason, ANZAC represents the place where Australians found themselves by accident. The value, mateship, self-sacrifice and integrity, of those soldiers were instrumental in the formation of Australian identity. Every year on April the 25th not less than 7000 Australians visit this area to pay respect to their fallen heroes. The epic facts of the ANZAC are reported by Mel Gibson and Mark Lee in the famous Australian movie “Gallipoli”.

From ANZAC cove the delegation had the opportunity to climb a little bit on Shrapnel Valley, where Turkish snipers killed hundreds of Allied, and



The ANZAC Cove

From the Staff



Wreath-lying ceremony at the Turkish cemetery

museum. During the night, Lieutenant General Gian Marco Chiarini, Commander NRDC-ITA, hosted a social event on a ferry boat along the Marmora. During the event, also attended by the Commander and Chief of Staff of the NATO Rapid Deployable Corps - Turkey, General Chiarini bid farewell to some Staff Officers who were due to leave the HQs soon. Seeing Istanbul from the ferry boat was an amazing experience and remarked the extreme historical importance of the strait!

On Friday, the “Panorama 1453” museum was visited. There, it was possible to appreciate the fall of Constantinople on a painted 360° ceiling sphere.

The exercise met all the goals prefixed; it increased the team building within the NRDC-ITA key leaders and multinational members and provided a great opportunity for the NRDC-ITA delegation to study on site the historic events which took place

appreciate for themselves how demanding the terrain was. Next stops were the Australian Lone Pine Cemetery and the Turkish Soldier Memorial where the delegation paid a visit and laid a commemoratives wreath to the heroic, tenacious and enduring Turkish soldier. The Nek, the Chinuk Bair and the New Zealand stands closed the tour leaving the delegation with a lot of unanswered strategic

questions. At the end of the third day, after a six hours bus transfer From Gallipoli peninsula the delegation arrived in the Pera district, the heart of Istanbul, a melting pot megalopolis where Europe hugs Asia. The day after, in Istanbul the group had the opportunity to visit the ancient area including Santa Sofia, the Blue Mosque, the Roman Cistern, the Topaki



NRDC-ITA Staff at Troy