



Sydney Morning Herald
24-Apr-2010
Page: 5
Travel
By: Bruce Elder
Region: Sydney
Circulation: 211066
Type: Capital City Daily
Size: 156.41 sq.cms
Frequency: MTWTFS-

ARMCHAIR JOURNEY

Gallipoli: The Battlefield Guide

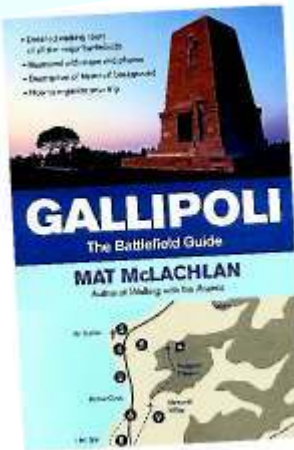
By Mat McLachlan
 Hachette, 388pp, \$29.99

ANZAC DAY brings out the Gallipoli books and, with battlefield tours becoming a boom industry, it is hardly surprising that there is an increasing number of battlefield guidebooks on the market.

This book, written by a travel agent who conducts Gallipoli battlefield tours, contains everything the traveller could possibly need to know. There are suggestions about accommodation, lists of websites, a critical appraisal of the major books about the campaign, very sensible advice about the problems of the area, information on how to research a specific Australian soldier and, most importantly, six very detailed tours that, if all were taken, would ensure that all the places of importance on the peninsula are visited.

McLachlan's tour technique is hard to fault. He explains exactly what is involved in each tour, quotes both historians and contemporary sources so the visitor can get a feeling for what a particular battle was like and offers detailed information about places and individuals, which makes each tour come alive.

For example, in his description of the Ari Burnu Cemetery, McLachlan draws attention to specific graves, including such idiosyncrasies as two brothers lying next to each other, graves of Muslims who served with the Indian Mule Corps, an Australian who fought with the Auckland Mounted Rifles and even a Maltese labourer



who was killed while building roads on the peninsula in 1915.

Books like this raise complex issues about the nature of tourism and the expectations of the modern traveller. Should a visitor experience the haunting, silent ambience of Gallipoli or should they develop a working knowledge of this very complex campaign? Why go to a battlefield? Voyeurism? To find the gravestone of a relative killed in the conflict? To wallow in some kind of patriotic notion of Australian

military greatness? To laugh at the folly of those who fought so pointlessly for king and country? Because everyone else is doing it?

Still, if you are planning to go to Gallipoli this is about as good as a guide can get. It is genuinely useful and informative.

Reviewed by Bruce Elder