



Araştırma Makalesi

<https://doi.org/10.46868/atdd.89>

Original Article

Gelibolu Gazisi John Masefield'in Muharebe Çabası*

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Öz

Bu makale bir İngiliz şairin Gelibolu muharebelerine verdiği desteği ele almaktadır. Orduya katıldıktan sonra savunma bakanlığının propaganda bürosu, Wellington House' da görev aldı, Savaşın ilk evrelerinde Fransa'da bulundu. Bulunduğu bölgede gezici sahra hastanesi oluşturmak istedi. Bunun için Amerika'da yaşadığı yıllarda yazdığı yazılarını satarak ve bağışlarla bir miktar para topladı. Fransız otoriteleri bu isteğini geri çevirince, dikkatini ihtiyacın daha büyük olduğu Gelibolu cephesine çevirdi. Uhdesinde bulunan parayla motorlu tekneler alarak Gelibolu cephesine götürdü. Orada yaralıları açıkta bekleyen hastane gemilere taşıdı. Propaganda bürosunun bir üyesi olarak kendisinden Gelibolu yenilgisinin destanının yazılması istendi. Masefield bir yazar ve şair olarak, kendisine verilen enformatik bilgi ve toplam savaş tecrübesini birleştirerek Gelibolu isimli bir kitap yazdı. Bu kitabın, savaşın kaderini değiştiren Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nin savaşa girmesinde etkili olduğu düşünülmektedir. Bu inceleme Gelibolu muharebeleri sırasında cereyan etmiş istihbarat savaşları ve savaş taktikleri hakkında, gerçekliği şüpheli olmakla birlikte, ilginç detaylar içermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Gelibolu, İstihbarat, Propaganda, Şair, Savaş Şiiri

Gönderme Tarihi: 12/01/2021

Kabul Tarihi:30/03/2021

* This article is the translated and expanded version of a chapter in my previously published book *Gelibolu'nun İngiliz Yazarları, Tiydem, Kayseri 2016*.

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Bu makaleyi şu şekilde kaynak gösterebilirsiniz:

GÜLLÜBAĞ, M., "Gelibolu Gazisi John Masefield'in Muharebe Çabası", *Akademik Tarih ve Düşünce Dergisi*, C. 8, S. 1., 2021, s.83-101.

Gallipoli Veteran John Masefield's War Effort

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Abstract

This article deals with an English poet's war effort in Gallipoli battles. He joined the military and then became a member of war propaganda bureau, the Wellington House. At the early phase of the war he was in France. He wanted to form a travelling field hospital in the region where he was serving. For this end, he sold his manuscripts, typescripts and autograph copies of his books and poems. Rejected by French authorities, he turned his attention on Gallipoli front where the need was greater. He bought motorboats with the money under his control and took them to Gallipoli. He carried the wounded to the hospital ships waiting off coast of Gallipoli. Then he was asked to write the epic of the defeat of Gallipoli by the propaganda bureau. Masefield wrought every detail of his experience and the information handed to him into the book titled *Gallipoli*. It is assumed that this book is instrumental in making US enter the war. This research contains interesting details of intelligence battles and battle tactics despite their veracity are equivocal.

Keywords: Gallipoli, Intelligence, Propaganda, Poet, War Poetry

Received Date: 12/01/2021

Accepted Date: 30/03/2021

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You can refer to this article as follows:

GÜLLÜBAĞ, M., "Gelibolu Gazisi John Masefield'in Muharebe Çabası", *Academic Journal of History and Idea*, Vol. 8, Issue. 1, 2021, p.83-101.

Галлиполи Ветеран войны Джон Мейсфилд

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Резюме

В этой статье рассказывается о военных действиях английского поэта в Галлипольских битвах. Он вступил в армию, а затем стал членом бюро военной пропаганды, Веллингтонского дома. В начале войны он был во Франции. Он хотел создать передвижной полевой госпиталь в регионе, где он служил. С этой целью он продавал свои рукописи, шрифты и автографы своих книг и стихов. Отвергнутый французскими властями, он обратил свое внимание на Галлиполи, где нуждались в помощи сильнее. На свои деньги он купил моторные лодки и отвез их в Галлиполи. Он доставил раненых к кораблям госпиталя, ожидавшим у берегов Галлиполи. Затем его попросили написать эпический доклад о поражении Галлиполи. Мейсфилд описал все детали своего опыта и информацию, переданную ему в книге под названием Галлиполи. Предполагается, что эта книга поможет США вступить в войну. Это исследование содержит интересные детали разведывательных сражений и тактики боя, несмотря на их двусмысленность.

Ключевые слова: галлиполи, интеллект, пропаганда, поэзия, военная поэзия

Получено: 12/01/2021

Принято: 30/03/2021

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Ссылка на статью:

GÜLLÜBAĞ, M., "Gelibolu Gazisi John Masefield'in Muharebe Çabası", *академическая история и мысль* Т. 8, NO.1, 2021, С.83-101.

Introduction

When the Great War began Siegfried Sassoon and Rupert Brooke were twenty seven, Wilfred Owen twenty one and the future Poet Laureate John Masefield was thirty six years old. Though he is widely thought to be old enough to be exempted from military service, he joined the staff as a hospital orderly in a British hospital for French soldiers in Haute-Marne, 1915. After the brief excruciating battle experiences on the Western front, he continued his service as a commander on an ambulance boat at Gallipoli. His true talent would emerge as a propagandist in the United States where he went in 1916 to lecture on English literature. Yet his Gallipoli experience and the observation he made in the US would serve him to write a book —*Gallipoli*— wherein he explained the reasons for the failure to be used as an initiation to counter German propaganda in the US. The book was a success.

John Masefield was born in Herefordshire in Ledbury on June 1st, 1878. His mother died giving birth to his sister when he was six. Her aunt thought very little of his curiosity in reading and writing. He left to board on a ship —*Conway*— to train himself for life and to break addiction to reading. Yet his experiences on this ship proved otherwise and his love of story-telling developed. His seafaring experiences gave him the first education as a story-teller. Then the passion to become a writer got the better of him and he left the seafaring in New York in 1895 and journeyed throughout the country as homeless vagrant, unskilled labourer and bar hand.

Masefield learnt of the ‘dirt and dross, the dirt and scum of the earth’ at first hand. He returned to England in 1897 and although plagued by ill-health, the would-be poet achieved success in 1899 with the publication of his first poem in a periodical. His first volume of verse, *Salt-Water Ballads*, was published in 1902.¹

One year later he married Constance de la Cherois Crommelin, who was his senior by eleven and a half years.

¹ Phillip W. Errington (ed.), *John Masefield's Great War*, Pen & Sword, South Yorkshire 2007, p. 2.

Among the works of Masfield were poetry, short stories, historical works, novels, plays, children's books and journalism. This was a "literary apprenticeship" phase for him.

This changed in 1911 with the publication of *The Everlasting Mercy* when Masfield arrived on the literary scene with a new and shocking voice... The Royal Society of Literature and J.M. Barrie called the poem 'incomparably the finest literature of the year'. Masfield continued writing long narrative poetry in 1912 with *The Window in the Bye Street* and *Dauber* in 1914.²

The Great War and John Masfield

In the year the Great War began Masfield was already among the prominent literary figures. John Betjeman later stated that the poems "Sea-Fever" and "Cargoes" "would be remembered as long as English language lasts".³ Such a success provided him with new contacts among literary circle. He was among the invitees to the Birthday party of Violet Asquith on April 16th, 1913. The other guests were Rupert Brooke, Mr and Mrs Shaw, Sylvia Gosse, J.M. Barrie and Walter Raleigh.⁴ His friends also included John Drinkwater, John Galsworthy, Lady Gregory, Thomas Hardy, W.B. Yeats.⁵

The developments in August 1914 inspired Masfield to write a poem titled "August 1914", which is the first war poem by Masfield. It consists of nineteen quatrains in three chapters. The first episode depicts the beauty of the English countryside. The second handles the love that former generations had in heart for the places where they had walks together with friends along the paths are now under the threat of a war that is 'pressing nigh'.⁶ Horses were to be taken from stalls, and the repair of the crack on the wall would be postponed until another time. Those hearts beating for the beautiful countryside would part from every object they loved and jump into the first transport that headed to the battlefield to pay their own price. Redeeming would be made by either feeling cold in trenches or going over the top or attacking the enemy. The second episode ends stating the redemption would be made somewhere else other than English soil. "Whilst reciting the poem at Yale University in 1916

² Phillip W. Errington (ed.), *John Masfield's Great War*, South Yorkshire, Pen & Sword 2007, p. 2.

³ P. W. Errington, *Ibid.*, p.2.

⁴ Christopher Hassall, *A Biography of Edward Marsh*, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York 1959, p.213.

⁵ P. W. Errington, *Ibid.*, p.2.

⁶ P. W. Errington, *Ibid.*, p.3.

he apparently broke down when reached” the first line of the last quatrain of the second episode,⁷ which reads:

And died (uncouthly, most) in foreign lands
For some idea but dimly understood
Of an English city never built by hands,
Which love of England promoted and made good.⁸

The last episode instils the hope of meeting again after death by the ties of love. The dead would never be forgotten and be remembered with fond feelings. Those ‘unknown generations of dead men’⁹ who have been killed in battles long ago still have the glory shining in the shires they were born. England will be again a place of peace and serenity. In the last quatrain of the last episode where England is pictured reads:

And silence broods like spirit on the brae;
A glimmering moon begins, the moonlight runs
Over the grasses of the ancient way,
Rutted this morning by the passing guns.¹⁰

Masefield was anxious to do his bit in this war as the men of the past ‘brooded by the fire with heavy mind’¹¹ before joining the effort. It did not take him long to resolve to join the military. “By December 1914 Masefield himself was a corporal, probably in RAMC¹². Masefield’s biographer stated he was ‘too old for the army’. This is incorrect.”¹³ He was medically found unfit but accepted for the reserve of officers. Rupert Brooke wrote of him and other intellectuals in a letter to his friend Russell Loines:

[I]t’s astonishing to see how the ‘intellectuals’ have taken on new jobs. Masefield drills hard in Hampstead ... Cornford is no longer the best Greek scholar in Cambridge. He

⁷ P. W. Errington, *Ibid.*, p.3.

⁸ Dominic Hibberd & John Onions, *Poetry of the Great War*, St Martin’s Press, New York 1994, p15.

⁹ D. Hibberd & J. Onions, *Ibid.*, p.14.

¹⁰ D. Hibberd & J. Onions, *Ibid.*, p.16.

¹¹ D. Hibberd & J. Onions, *Ibid.*, p.15.

¹² Royal Army Medical Corps

¹³ P. W. Errington, *Ibid.*, p.3.

recalled that he was a very good shot in his youth and a sergeant-Instructor in musketry. I'm here [Blanford]. My brother is a 2nd Lieutenant in the Post Office Rifles.¹⁴

Despite the fact that Masefield's early war work is unattainable, we learn some details about it from the diary Constance confided under the entry of February 18, 1915. "[I]t is decided that Jan is to go under the Red Cross. He was up in town all yesterday, saw the Secretary, accepted the work, tried on khaki tunics, breeches and caps ... Jan is quiet and resolute. Of course I am glad to think he will be of use."¹⁵ On first of March he set out for France to stay of around six weeks. He had arrived at château of Arc-en-Barrois by 3 March where his first task was "to help in taking off a man's arm at the shoulder. He reported to Constance that ... I did my part all right, and got a compliment from the chief. I felt too great pity and interest to feel queer. The man is doing well, such a nice fellow."¹⁶ Masefield carried out the tasks that of orderly but someone had to do them. Among those incessant tasks included serving meals, carrying the wounded, attending operations, collecting patients from transports, and carpentry. It was a highly physical and filthy job. Masefield was working every detail into his letters to Constance. His heartrending descriptions were like prose version of what Siegfried Sassoon, Isaac Rosenberg, Wilfred Owen and other poets did in poetry:

One had been lying out for four days on the battlefield, without tending or food, one had a leg smashed to pieces, and another had been blown by a shell and bits of rope in his face and no eyes and no nose, and his knee broken and his wrist, and another had been blown by a bomb and another had septic diarrhoea and dying now.¹⁷

As he was going through such experiences he felt guilty claiming that there is nothing human(e) about war or writing about it. "We literary men have been very evil, writing about war. To fight is bad enough, but it has its manly side, but to let the mind dwell on it and peck its carrion and write of it is devilish, unmanly thing and that's what we've been doing."¹⁸ As the days pass by in army routines he was informed that Rupert Brooke is dead. Brooke's mother sent him W.B. Yeats' *The King's Threshold: and On the Baile's Strand* with a

¹⁴ Nigel Jones, *Rupert Brooke: Life, Death and Myth*, BBC Books, London 2003, p.395.

¹⁵ P. W. Errington, *Ibid.*, p.4.

¹⁶ P. W. Errington, *Ibid.*, p.5.

¹⁷ P. W. Errington, *Ibid.*, p.6-7.

¹⁸ P. W. Errington, *Ibid.*, p. 7.

bookplate of Brooke's initials written on the inside front cover. Masfield kept this until his own death over a half century later.¹⁹

The Wounded and Masfield's Efforts to Help

He was excessively impressed by the conditions in which the wounded were brought to the hospital and had the intention to gather money to improve their conditions. The wounded reached the hospital in most appalling condition and means, worse still they mostly reached two, sometimes three days' wait or journey. Such delays caused deaths or unspeakable suffering. He and some of his fellow workers had in mind to establish a travelling Field Hospital serving the wounded in hut or tent close to the actual battlefield. In a letter addressed to his brother, Harry, Masfield wrote: "We have raised about £3000 from private friends and are now waiting for the French to sanction us. We may be asked to go to the Dardanelles, instead of to the Argonne, as the need may be greater there."²⁰ He wrote to The New York Times offering to "sell manuscripts, typescripts and autograph copies of my books and poems to any of my American readers who may wish to buy them."²¹

By mid-July he was informed by French authorities that no more foreign forces were needed in Arc-en-Barrois. Masfield directed his attention more intensely on Gallipoli where forces greatly suffered from lack of medical facilities. "The service card for the British Red Cross shows July 1915 as the date of engagement and notes he was in charge of motor launch at Mudros."²² Now he was officially ready for the sea ambulance service at Dardanelles. The amount he gathered was not enough "to purchase not only a 32-horsepower twin-screw motorboat, which he named the *Agnes*, but two smaller vessels, a launch and a barge, which he gave the joint names *John* and *Ada* in honour of the writer John Galsworthy and his wife."²³ On 13 August 1915 he set off for Gallipoli leading his flotilla. Despite he seemed out of practice, he sailed *Agnes* to Gallipoli followed by his flotilla comprised of launches *Doreen*, *Griffin*, *Miaou*, *Lytham*.²⁴ It took him and his flotilla almost a month to get to Mudros. On the way to Gallipoli he passed Skyros where Rupert Brooke was buried. Six months later he published two sonnets, both untitled, which were dedicated to the memory of Brooke. "The second sonnet had been first written in a letter to Edward Marsh. It claimed

¹⁹ P. W. Errington, *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁰ P. W. Errington, *Ibid.*, p.9.

²¹ P. W. Errington, *Ibid.*, p.9.

²² P. W. Errington, *Ibid.*, p.10.

²³ Jill Hamilton, *From Gallipoli to Gaza: The Desert Poets of the World War One*, Simon & Schuster, East Roseville 2003, p. 74-5.

²⁴ P. W. Errington, *Ibid.*, p.11.

‘From one grave that island talked to me’ and was originally entitled ‘Skyros’²⁵. He expressed his grief over the loss of a dear friend and the human cost of the war in the first sonnet stating: ‘Skyros whose shadows the great seas erase, / And Seddul Bahr that ever more blood carves’²⁶ However, it seems not possible to meet the friend in this rampage: ‘Earth and the world-wide battle lie between, / Death lies between, and friend-destroying sea.’²⁷ In his second sonnet Masefield alluding to Brooke’s sonnet “Soldier” in which the place an English soldier falls is ‘for ever England’. He emphasises that the grave of Brooke will be a part of the island and earth:

And, in that heap of rocks, your body lies,
Part of the island till planet ends²⁸

Masefield’s part in this battle was to take the wounded from the field hospitals in Gallipoli and to get them to the ones in Mudros. He described the things that happened to him during his Gallipoli expedition in a letter to his brother, Harry. He noted: “Gallipoli was a crowded and disappointing time, and I got dysentery there, which lost me about a stone ... I was at Anzac with the Australians, and had in a brief time a full experience of war; lice, fleas dysentery, shells, bombs, shrapnel, sniping and a chase by a submarine.”²⁹

His battle experiences were limited to the hardships at the back areas. Compared to the hardships endured by the fighting Tommies, his troubles were of no importance. In his letter of October 12 to his wife he depicts the battle wounds:

As you know, I’ve seen pretty nearly every kind of wound, including some which took a stout heart to look at, but the burns easily surpassed anything I’ve ever seen. There were people with tops of their heads burnt off and stinking like frizzled meat, and the top all red and dripping with pus, and their faces all gone, and their arms just covered with a kind of gauntlet of raw meat, and perhaps their whole bodies, from their knees to their shoulders, without any semblance of skin. One can’t describe such wounds.³⁰

²⁵ P. W. Errington, *Ibid.*, p.11.

²⁶ J. Hamilton, *Ibid.*, p.75.

²⁷ J. Hamilton, *Ibid.*, p.76.

²⁸ J. Hamilton, *Ibid.*, p.76.

²⁹ P. W. Errington, *Ibid.*, p.11.

³⁰ P. W. Errington, *Ibid.*, p.17.

As early as May 1915 John Masefield was invited to the propaganda and intelligence centre Wellington House. Masefield, in a sense, had become a member of propaganda machine and was writing pieces for Gilbert Parker praising the Americans. By mid-October Masefield had already returned to England. Towards the end of the month he visited the most infamous battlefield Somme where he observed the sea of mud personally. The information he gathered there would be the source of inspiration for his further books. He planned a conference tour to America. His lectures would cover “William Shakespeare’, ‘English Tragedy’, ‘English Poetry’ and ‘Chaucer’... Masefield was in the United States for three months between 12 January and 18 March 1916 visiting over thirty towns or cities.”³¹

The failure in the Dardanelles had impaired the English image in America. He got acquainted with well-known American banker Thomas W. Lamont and his wife. After his return to England, to Florence Lamont he wrote: “[W]e must set to work, we two, to make England and America tremendous friends.”³² From then on Masefield’s pen turned to propaganda and betterment of the English image. He made use of his battle experiences along with the information handed to him. He began writing *Gallipoli* in April 1916. “The Government put me on the job, inasmuch as I had been through part of the campaign, and placed before me all the official records. The book had to be written quickly.”³³ The book was completed on 19 June 1916.

The book was going to be the epic of the defeat and defeat was a familiar word to Masefield. From his early life on he knew what trouble meant suffering from the lack of sense of security due to having lost his parents, and later, suffering from his health problems and returning England. This must have had a deep impact on his personality, as Erkurt propounds in his critical approach “author’s idio-culture” that an author is not an independent entity of his social environment, which is his/her “dia-culture”, and on top of that his/her genetic inheritance, formal education and other personal traits all-together reveal themselves in the literary output.”³⁴ So, many of the characters he created were invariably defeated. The poem “The Wanderer”, published in 1914, ends in stating:

Life’s battle is a conquest for the strong;

³¹ P. W. Errington, *Ibid.*, p.11-2.

³² P. W. Errington, *Ibid.*, p.13.

³³ P. W. Errington, *Ibid.*, p.14.

³⁴ Gökhan Şefik Erkurt, “Edebiyat İncelemesine Bütünsel Metodik Bir Öneri: İdiokültürel Eleştirisi” in *Ex Oriente Lux: Varianten der deutsch-türkischen Begegnungen*, Logos Verlag, Berlin 2019, p. 43-4.

The meaning shows in the defeated thing.³⁵

In this context Masefield was tailor-made for rendering the Gallipoli defeat into a battle of heroism. He begins each chapter with a quotation from the twelfth century *The Song of Roland*, wherein the Franks were slaughtered by the Basques providing a sense of epic in defeat, by which he adds a sense of drama physicality and movement.³⁶ However one should keep in mind that Masefield's purpose here is not to reflect the actual events about the battles but to feed the propaganda machine. The book has been dedicated to Ian Hamilton and the officers under his command.

Masefield's Book: *Gallipoli*

Masefield begins his book by referring to the questions and criticisms about Gallipoli battles. He takes the defeat as the greatest second event, perhaps to give it an air of epic, after the gallant Belgium's resistance against the German bully. The defeat is neither a tragedy nor a failure. Neither the arms nor the noble soldiers who bore them are responsible for the result. In history, to Masefield, many an honourable resistance have lost in similar way.

Passing the straits would bring end to the Turkish existence in Europe and freedom to the harbours of the allied countries. As he put forward such proposals, he was serving to the benefits of his country and did not care about the Turks who made this land their home for thousands of years. What he put stress on was that Turks always outnumbered them, and had better and sound communication system. Any attempt that could be made from Asiatic shores would be cut with ease by the *hordes* of armed Turks. What is striking here is the fact that Turks, who defend their country, are "armed hordes", while the soldiers of an invading army are "just soldiers or duty performers". Their objective was to silence the Asiatic Gun as formerly Compton Mackenzie tried very hard but failed. Just for the sake of emblazoning their effort, showing how great the Turkish effort was Masefield wrote:

In addition, the beaches close to Cape Helles were within range of big guns mounted near Troy on the Asian shore, and the beach near Gaba Tepe was ranged by the guns in the olive-groves to the south and on the hills to the north of it. A strong Turkish army held the Peninsula, and very powerful reserves were at Bulair, all well supplied (chiefly by boat from the Asian shore) with food and munitions. German officers had organized

³⁵ P. W. Errington, *Ibid.*, p.14.

³⁶ P. W. Errington, *Ibid.*, p.14.

the defence of the Peninsula with great professional skill. They had made it a fortress of great strength, differing from all other fortresses in this, that besides being almost impregnable it was almost unapproachable.³⁷

His special effort to delineate the surrounding is for a cause. A tad to the north of the delineated place is Sedd-el-Bahr and the opposite (due to the recess) side is V Beach where one of the bloodiest landings took place and the epic defence of Sergeant Yahya was made. Masefield repeatedly puts stress on the fact that Turks and her allies knew the land better than they did and always outnumbered them³⁸ when barely 67 men and one Sergeant, Yahya, defended the cove against the troops that filled the collier, *River Clyde*.

The book of epic defeat would be decorated with personalities of feat. One of those was Lieutenant Bernard Freyberg who lit flares to distract the Turkish forces from where the real landings were taking place:

At Bulair, one man, Lieutenant Freyberg, swam ashore from a destroyer towing a little raft of flares. Near the shore he lit two of these flares, then, wading on to the land, he lit others at intervals along the coast; then he wandered inland, naked, on a personal reconnaissance, and soon found a large Turkish army strongly entrenched. Modesty forbade further intrusion. He went back to the beach and swam off to his destroyer; could not find her in the dark, and swam for several miles, was exhausted and cramped, and was at last picked up, nearly dead. This magnificent act of courage and endurance, done by one unarmed man, kept a large Turkish army at Bulair during the critical hours of the landing.³⁹

Masefield occasionally alludes to great battles fought by other nations adumbrating the battles at Chinampo and Chemulpho fought by Japanese, at Pitzewo by Russians, Daiquiri by Spanish are just like skirmishes compared to the one English fought at Gallipoli. Something they cannot conceive or understand was the resoluteness of the Turks who drove them to despondency. The marksmanship of the Turkish soldier and well-directed artillery shelling

³⁷ John Masefield, *Gallipoli*, S. B. Gundy, Toronto 1916, p.24.

³⁸ J. Masefield, *Ibid.*, p.25.

³⁹ J. Masefield, *Ibid.*, p.44-5.

from field guns are the most effective instruments to drive them to despair. “Something in the Turk commander, and the knowledge that a success there would bring our men across the Peninsula within a day, made the Turks more desperate enemies there than elsewhere.”⁴⁰

The Germans were spreading the rumours that the Turks, who were defending their lands at the cost of their blood and sweat, were almost out of munitions. Such a propaganda rolled by the Germans would drive the English, sworn to expel the Turks out of Europe and then help her ally Russia through the straits, organise more severe attacks, which would ease the German advance on the Western front at the cost of her ally. However differently did Masefield tell of this in his work, the result of this propaganda leads to this point. Of the German anti-propaganda Masefield wrote:

The legend, "that the Turks were at their last cartridge, and would have surrendered had we advanced," is very widely spread abroad by German emissaries. It appears in many forms, in print, in the lecture, and in conversation. Sometimes place and date are given, sometimes the authority, all confidently, but always differently. It is well to state here the truth, so that the lie may be known.⁴¹

On the first days of the battle the German Officers in the Ottoman Army ordered the Turks the extirpation of the enemy and the only means for the freedom is in either winning the battle or dying on the battlefield. In addition Masefield stresses the fact that every troop had a particular detail and the enemy sometimes ordered their troops in English just to baffle them, unfurling the difficulty of handling such an enemy. He calls Muslim priests —Imams— “Mahometan priests”, which gives the impression that he had very little knowledge on Islam or Religion of Islam. It should be noted that the 29th Battalion is the best trained and hand-picked unit to fight in the campaign. He noted:

... for the Mahometan priests to encourage the men to advance, for officers to shoot those soldiers who hung back, and for prisoners to be left with the reserves, not taken to the rear. In this early part of the campaign there were many German officers in the

⁴⁰ J. Masefield, *Ibid.*, p.53.

⁴¹ J. Masefield, *Ibid.*, p.64.

Turkish army. In these early night attacks they endeavoured to confuse our men by shouting orders to them in English. One, on the day of the landing, walked up to one of the trenches of the 29th Division, and cried out: "Surrender, you English, we ten to one." "He was thereupon hit on the head with a spade by a man who was improving his trench with it."⁴²

The enemy is so experienced and sly that in the observations made through the field glasses at the grounds to be attacked spotted trees, plots of rising grounds and houses but no cannons, trenches or enemy at all. All the observations made by aircraft availed nothing. To deflect the artillery fire, the Turks turned the earth afresh making it impossible to tell whether it is a trench or just a ruse to draw fire:

The trenches were hidden cunningly, often with a head cover of planks so strewn with earth and planted with scrub as to be indistinguishable from the ground about. The big guns were coloured cunningly, like a bird or snake upon the ground. From above in an aeroplane an observer could not pick them out so as to be certain, if they were not in action at the time.⁴³

The third chapter of the book ends in enunciations to ignite American sentiments. "These British are the finest fighters in the world. We [the Turks] have chosen the wrong friends."⁴⁴ These words are claimed to have been quoted from a letter of a dead Turkish officer.

Frequent reiterations of the objectives of the battles were a requisite to persuade American folk. In addition to the objectives iterated at the beginning of the book, the other objective was to weaken the resistance against the Russian troops marching over Erzurum. The Russians would try the Black Sea coasts and the Turks who split their forces would lose strength in Mesopotamia, by means of which the Russian troops coming from Caucasia would convene with British troops in today's Iraq. In consequence of this the control of the whole

⁴² J. Masfield, *Ibid.*, p.69.

⁴³ J. Masfield, *Ibid.*, p.72.

⁴⁴ J. Masfield, *Ibid.*, p.84.

Middle East and additionally India and Egypt would have been secured. Nevertheless humiliating defeats were awaiting them in Gallipoli 1915 and Kut-el-Amara 1916.

Deficiency of troops has always been put forward as a reason for the failure of the battles. However, despite the fact that all requisites are supplied, Turks held the commanding positions and had better water supplies in the heat of summer. To make this understandable for the American public Masfield wrote: "Summer came upon Gallipoli with a blinding heat only comparable to New York in July."⁴⁵ Somewhere else in the book, Masfield quotes from the apostrophising soldiers: "Men in Gallipoli in the summer of 1915 learned to curse the sun as an enemy more cruel than the Turk."⁴⁶ For those who criticised the shortage of men would be redeemed by sending more men he retorted by quoting from the depths of history, from the Song of Roland:

[T]he Franks could and did beat the Saracens, but the Saracens brought up another army before the Franks were reinforced. The Franks could and did beat that army, too, but the Saracens brought up another army before the Franks were reinforced. The Franks could and did beat that army, too, but then they were spent, and Roland had to sound his horn, and Charlemagne would not come to the summons of the horn, and the heroes were abandoned in the dolorous pass.⁴⁷

Despite all denunciation very tough battles have been fought bravely. Most of them were hand-to-hand combats where both sides suffered great losses. This sacrificial struggle has been converted into propaganda by the epic narrative of Masfield. Lone Pine is the most outstanding site where such tough combats took place and the greatest Anzac cemetery is. Under treacherous conditions there fought Anzac troops with a devoted *élan*. Masfield noted:

For those five days and nights the fight for Lone Pine was one long personal scrimmage in the midst of explosion. For those five days and nights the Australians lived and ate and slept in that gallery of the mine of death, in a half-darkness lit by great glares, in

⁴⁵ J. Masfield, *Ibid.*, p.96.

⁴⁶ J. Masfield, *Ibid.*, p.97.

⁴⁷ J. Masfield, *Ibid.*, p.95-6.

filth, heat, and corpses, among rotting and dying and mutilated men, with death blasting at the doors only a few feet away, and intense and bloody fighting, hand to hand, with bombs, bayonets, and knives, for hours together by night and day. When the Turks gave up the struggle, the dead were five to the yard in that line of works; they were heaped in a kind of double wall all along the sides of the trench.⁴⁸

They fought there bravely, courageously and sacrificially because “[m]en of many races were banded together there. There were Australians, English, Indians, Maoris and New Zealanders, made one by devotion to a cause, and all willing to die that so their comrades might see the dawn make a steel streak of the Hellespont from the peaked hill now black against the stars.”⁴⁹

Despite all this devotion the reason behind this failure was water scarcity. The Turks supplied their water either in the very place they are or by a source close-by, and most advantageously without any interruption, while the allied forces had to supply more than half of it with means out of the peninsula. Just because of this reason most of the troops suffered from the water scarcity very seriously and some of them lost their minds during the 7 August attack. Masfield used water scarcity as a reason for the failure. He condemns the Turks for “[s]ome unpolluted wells of drinkable, though brackish, water were found; but most of these were guarded by snipers, who shot at men going to them. Many men were killed thus and many more wounded, for the Turk snipers were good shots, cleverly hidden.”⁵⁰

On the days that followed the great attack of August 7 charges continued. The troops were deepening their trenches for better protection and comfort during the dark hours, but it availed nothing. It had been noted that the Turks raided the trenches incessantly. On one of those nights the Turks’ march to death is depicted in the following manner, unless it is exaggerated for propagandistic purposes:

In the darkness before dawn, when our men on the hill were busy digging themselves better cover for the day's battle, the Turks, now strongly reinforced from Bulair and

⁴⁸ J. Masfield, *Ibid.*, p.124-5.

⁴⁹ J. Masfield, *Ibid.*, p.126.

⁵⁰ J. Masfield, *Ibid.*, p.140.

Asia, assaulted Chunuk with not less than 15,000 men. They came on in a monstrous mass, packed shoulder to shoulder, in some places eight deep, in others three or four deep. Practically all their first line were shot by our men, practically all the second line were bayoneted, but the third line got into our trenches and overwhelmed the garrison. Our men fell back to the second line of trenches, and rallied and fired; but the Turks overwhelmed that line too, and then with their packed multitude they paused and gathered like a wave, burst down on the Wiltshire Regiment, and destroyed it almost to a man. Even so, the survivors, outnumbered forty to one, formed and charged with the bayonet, and formed and charged a second time, with a courage [*sic*] which makes the charge of the Light Brigade⁵¹ seem like a dream.⁵²

The last chapter of the book includes the details of the retreat and evasion. The retreat and evasion commensurate with the aim of the book is recounted in an air of weary warrior. He especially puts stress on the unbending willpower of the enemy to defend their country and the fact that the victory is a natural outcome of these heroically sacrificial troops:

Nothing can be said of that fight, no words can describe nor any mind imagine [*sic*] it, except as a roaring and blazing hour of killing. Our last reserves came up to it, and the Turks were beaten back; very few of their men reached their lines alive. The Turk dead lay in thousands all down the slopes of the hill; but the crest of the hill, the prize, remained in Turk hands, not in ours.⁵³

⁵¹ For better insight into “The Charge of Light Brigade” by Alfred Tennyson, see the poem and my previously published book *HALF THE SPLENDOUR: Comradeship in World War I Poetry* p. 46-48.

⁵² J. Masfield, *Ibid.*, p.153.

⁵³ J. Masfield, *Ibid.*, p.154.

Conclusion

When disappointed British forces initiated their retreat, a blizzard hit the peninsula on 26-28 November. This storm killed one tenth of the total strength on the battlefields. Masfield notes that these battles' cost was 115,000 dead and at least 100,000 casualties. Just to emphasise their better management he claims that the casualties on the Turkish side is much greater. Masfield wrote the "epic of the defeat" just to persuade the United States to enter the Great War. It is not certain whether the success of the book persuaded the United States enter the war; the US declared war on Germany April 6, 1917, in compliance with the result that Britain expected so long.

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