

Turkish defenders

For the Turks this was a Holy War, a struggle to drive out Christian invaders from Muslim Turkey. Time and again the Turks charged downhill on the Allies and were slaughtered by Vickers machine-guns.

Lack of support and enthusiasm

The Gallipoli campaign got little real support from the armed forces. Sir John French refused to release troops from the Western Front. Kitchener believed the war would be won on the Western Front, not in the east.

Lack of surprise

The Turks knew well in advance about the Gallipoli landings and strengthened their defences. It took the British several weeks to organise the landings.

Why did the Gallipoli campaign fail?

Too ambitious

From the beginning the plan had little or no chance of success. It was highly unlikely to achieve its aims of knocking Turkey and then Austria out of the war. There was no serious thought as to what to do once the Allies had captured Gallipoli. How would they take Constantinople?

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Sir Maurice Hankey, a member of Britain's War Council

No one has worked out how many soldiers and guns are needed to take Gallipoli from the Turks. We have just said that we can ship a certain number of soldiers there and that ought to be enough.

Poor organisation

The British did not practice and used out-of-date maps for the landings. During the naval campaign they failed to use proper minesweepers to remove the Turkish mines. The only realistic chance of success was a combined army and navy operation. Instead they were carried out separately.