As the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I passes, it is worthwhile to reflect on the lessons that the conflict can teach the joint force. Most remember the war as being primarily fought by land forces; jointness did occur, though the gaps among the different domains were clear. The Gallipoli Campaign executed in the Dardanelles Strait in April 1915 was one of the few events in the war that incorporated land, sea, subsurface, air, and multinational operations at all levels of war that today can be recognized as a true joint operation. The attempt by the allied nations in February and March of 1915 to execute a naval assault through the Dardanelles to threaten the Ottoman Empire’s capital of Constantinople (now Istanbul) had three objectives: force the empire’s surrender, open a route behind the German lines, and bolster ailing ally Russia, who could not face the Ottomans and Germans on its own. Once the naval attack was stymied by effective shore-to-ship artillery firing from hardened forts and the mining of the strait, the allies planned to conduct amphibious landings, allowing the army to seize the fortifications.
and silence the enemy guns so the navy could pass safely to Constantinople.

This plan, recognized today as a joint forcible entry, involved coordination among all domains, as well as the synchronization among numerous multinational participants, including troops from Australia, Belgium, France, India, Morocco, Nepal, New Zealand, Newfoundland, Russia, Senegal, Syria, along with Jewish Palestinian refugees. The Gallipoli Campaign offers the joint force five main lessons when examining possible forcible entry operations within the multidomain operational (MDO) concept:

- unity of command
- coordination of joint fires
- multiple dilemmas
- logistics and consolidation gains
- health service support concept.

Joint Forcible Entry

According to a recent National Military Strategy of the United States, the “U.S. military stands ready to project power to deny an adversary’s objectives and decisively defeat any actor that threatens the U.S. homeland, our national interests, or our allies and partners.”

Looking at large-scale combat operations within the MDO concept, oriented against a peer competitor, the end-point of the projection of that power will culminate with joint forcible entry, which joint doctrine defines as operations to “seize and hold lodgements against armed opposition.” A lodgement is defined as a “designated area in a hostile or potentially hostile operational area . . . that affords continuous landing of troops and materiel while providing maneuver space for subsequent operations.”

Forcible entry will most likely occur in the seize the initiative and dominate phases of the joint combat operational model. As such, it becomes crucial in allowing the joint force to progress toward controlling the operational environment, achieving strategic military and political objectives, and setting the conditions to advance to subsequent phases of the operation. Joint doctrine introduces numerous considerations when planning this type of operation. As one of the first true joint forcible entries in the modern era, the events in the Dardanelles in April 1915 provide a historical case study for modern military professionals to study in order to supplement this doctrinal guidance. Gallipoli presents several lessons still applicable today when examining potential future large-scale combat operations within the MDO concept.

Unity of Command

Unity of command is a core principle of joint operations and is defined as the “operation of all forces under a single responsible commander who has the requisite authority to direct and employ those forces in pursuit of a common purpose.” The common purpose is the achievement of unified action, which is enabled by the union of all military efforts directed by a singular leader.

Due to the complexity of joint forcible entry operations and the coordination required among the different services across all domains, to include multinational participants, joint doctrine recognizes that achieving unity of command is vital for success. After the evacuation of allied forces from Gallipoli, the Dardanelles Commission was formed by order of the British government to determine the origin, inception, and conduct of operations. In 1917, the commission issued its first report, which determined that the entire operation lacked unity of effort from the top down. The report stated, “It is impossible to read all the evidence, or to study the voluminous papers which have been submitted to us, without being struck with the atmosphere of vagueness and want of precision which seems to have characterised the proceedings of the War Council.” This council was dominated by the overbearing personalities of Secretary of State for War Lord Herbert Kitchener and First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill, neither of whom were experts in naval or amphibious warfare. The commission found that the specialists present were hesitant to express their opinions or voice dissent due to the personalities of these two men. The commission concluded that technical matters for campaign planners were “guided wholly by the views laid before them by the Secretary of State for War and the First Lord of the Admiralty.” Finally, the commission found that at the end of each planning meeting of the Dardanelles War Council, many “left without having any very clear idea of what had or had not been decided.”

Starting at the strategic level, these two prevailing characters, often at odds with each other, resulted in a divided unity of command from the commencement of operations. The effects of this quickly trickled down to the operational and tactical levels. The commission found that Sir Ian Hamilton, appointed as the overall ground commander of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force for the Dardanelles, was perplexed by the command structure. The final report concluded that Hamilton appeared to have regarded Kitchener as the commander in chief rather than Secretary of State for War, bypassing the established military chain of command to take all guidance directly from him. When later questioned on his actions, Hamilton stated that every decision he made was overshadowed and critiqued by Kitchener.

The Dardanelles Commission report highlighted three issues with Hamilton’s leadership and plan. First, his invasion concept allowed for zero flexibility and hinged on unrealistic expectations. Once Hamilton had his plan approved, it allowed for no deviation at the tactical level. The commission concluded that the invasion plan “entered into so much detail as to what was to be done if all went well that they left little margin for the unexpected.” It further claimed that the rigidity of the plan and its reliance on assumed success was responsible for the damping of the initiative of the commanders at the direct level, preventing them from exploiting what successes were achieved. Second, he had no reserves available to exploit opportunities or reinforce forces stymied at the landing points. Third, his entire army staff was located on the HMS Queen Elizabeth, a dreadnought-class battleship commanded by the Royal Navy and also tasked with fire.
support for the landing. Consequently, while the ship gave Hamilton mobility, it meant he had limited direct communication and span of control over his dispersed landing forces.\(^{12}\)

Since the initial Dardanelles operation was a naval endeavor, critics would later claim that though Hamilton was appointed as the commander for the entire operation, he was always treated as an auxiliary of the Royal Navy and a minor nuisance to be tolerated until the navy could again assume control.\(^{13}\) This was reinforced by the insistence of Churchill on the importance of the navy, in contrast to Kitchener, to any who would listen. The commission also noticed this division, which was propagated by both dominant senior leaders. To alleviate this, it suggested that a specially equipped and dedicated unarmed vessel with adequate signaling capabilities that could house both staffs from the navy and army together would have allowed for a more effective unity of command and span of control during the landings.\(^{14}\)

When asked in an unguarded moment about the campaign difficulties, Hamilton, ever the loyal subordinate, stated, “Lord Kitchener is a great genius, but like every great genius he has blind spots.”\(^{15}\) For modern military professionals, the Gallipoli campaign demonstrates the dangers of how division at the political and strategic levels can affect operations at the operational and tactical levels of war. It also reflects what can occur when dominating leaders refuse to utilize the “understand, visualize, describe, direct, lead, and assess” operations process loop.\(^{16}\) Lastly, Gallipoli graphically illustrates the importance of undertaking a whole-of-government approach aimed at achieving unified action through unity of effort guided by unity of command. If the message coming from the strategic level is divisive or heavily dictatorial, it is extremely challenging for a commander to nest the efforts of joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational forces aligned against a singular objective.

**Joint Fires**

Joint doctrine understands that “In forcible entry operations, the initial assault forces are building combat power in the operational area from nothing as quickly as possible.” It recognizes that forces will normally have minimal to no artillery fire support initially available. To assist with this, doctrine declares that “Fires from aircraft (manned and unmanned) and/or naval platforms (surface/subsurface) take on added importance to compensate for the lack of artillery.”\(^{17}\) Planners for the operation did identify the importance of fires in supporting the Gallipoli landing forces.

War Council planners understood that the Dardanelles Strait was protected by numerous hardened forts hidden among the hills, invisible from direct line of sight. These positions contained heavy Turkish guns, thwarting any attempt to force the strait or land troops. However, as Churchill later stated during the commission’s investigation, “This war had brought many surprises. We had seen fortresses reputed throughout Europe to be impregnable collapsing after a few days’ attack by field armies without a regular siege.”\(^{18}\) Events on land at the Western Front had demonstrated that previously impenetrable forts could be easily destroyed by howitzers. To mitigate the concern over the inability to spot the forts directly from the ships, it was decided, in a first for modern warfare, to use seaplanes and air balloons, which planners believed could act as spotters for indirect fire.\(^{19}\)

Despite the evidence demonstrated on land at the Western Front, one of the first attempts at joint fire support for the landings in the Dardanelles was disastrous. As noted by the commission, they overlooked the fact that “Guns as mounted on board ships cannot be given sufficient elevation to obtain high-angle fire similar to howitzers.”\(^{20}\) The success of howitzers on land against hardened positions was later found to be due to the high-angle entry of the shells, which exploded within the forts bypassing outer walls, hills, and other obstacles. Ship-to-shore fire during the landings had little effect on Turkish forts and entrenched positions due to the angle of fire and the armor-piercing instead of high-explosive shells used. Lastly, the belief fell short that the untested tactic of coordinated fires, aided by aerial observation, would make up for the inability to spot the forts by direct line of sight. The seaplanes “did not fulfill expectations, as the engine power was deficient, and there was much difficulty experienced in rising from the water when there was any sea.”\(^{21}\)

Though joint fire support efforts failed to suppress the Turkish forts during the landing, they did aid in halting counterattacks, allowing the landing parties to gain a foothold. It would also set the tone and shape of the battlefield for the rest of the campaign. German General Liman von Sanders, commander of all Ottoman forces on the Dardanelles, later commented on the effectiveness of allied fire support, stating, “the artillery effect of the hostile battleships constituted a support of extraordinary power for the landing of the army.”\(^{22}\) Sanders also noted the synchronization that land- and sea-based artillery quickly achieved after the initial landings. He claimed, “the roar of the guns on the coasts of the peninsula never ceased day or night. When the land batteries ceased firing, the ships’ guns began, and vice versa.”\(^{23}\)

Gallipoli validates the concept of coordinated joint fires and their importance during joint forcible entry attempts. As discussed, Kitchener and Churchill dominated the planning process; both had little understanding of joint coordinated fires between ships and shore, aided by aerial spotting. Rather than allowing subject matter experts to inform the War Council on each service’s capabilities, these two men pressured everyone to continue with the plan. The result was split: joint fires failed to suppress the Turkish forts during the invasion and subsequent 8-month campaign but were effective in allowing landing forces to gain a foothold and later shaped the nature of the peninsula conflict.

The overall operational objective of the entire campaign was to silence the Turkish forts in order to allow the navy to pass to threaten Constantinople, which was never achieved. Due to the infancy of joint fires and the suppression of subject matter experts during the planning phase,
the concept was never fully developed and leveraged to its full effect. A core lesson for joint planners is evident: during planning, all key fire experts from each service and nation participating must establish capabilities, communication, and employment prior to execution in order to leverage the full effect of joint fire support.

Multiple Dilemmas
Joint doctrine acknowledges that forcible entry may include a combination of amphibious and air assault operations. It champions presenting the enemy with multiple dilemmas that create “threats that exceed the enemy’s capability to respond.” The overall goal is to create a “coordinated attack that overwhelms the enemy before they have time to react” and to facilitate follow-on operations.24 Hamilton received much condemnation for his decision to land his force at multiple points. Numerous critics claimed he should have landed in one place, using a strategy of deterrence mixed with surprise. However, despite attempts at secrecy, the Ottomans knew well in advance that Hamilton’s force was coming and had ample preparation time. To counter this, Hamilton presented his enemy with multiple dilemmas in order to confuse and overwhelm their ability to react.

Once it was realized that the navy alone could not force the straits and threaten Constantinople, Hamilton concluded that to effectively “force the passage of the Dardanelles, the cooperation of the whole military force will be necessary.”25 Due to the terrain, entrenched enemy, and lack of surprise, rather than putting all of his troops ashore in one landing area via a tiered force flow, Hamilton decided to land his entire force at once at different locations.26 He acknowledged his plan “involved difficulties for which no precedent was forthcoming in military history.” Hamilton lacked an accurate intelligence estimate of enemy forces or even maps that reflected the terrain. From this he decided it was necessary “not only to land simultaneously at as many points as possible, but to threaten to land at other points as well,” thus setting the stage for the first joint and multinational forcible entry operation in the modern era.27

In the early morning of April 25, 1915, after a brief but intense naval bombardment, the 29th British Division conducted a deliberate amphibious attack on five beaches (labeled S, V, W, X, Y) in the Cape Helles region on the European side of the Dardanelles, with an endstate of overwhelming Ottoman forces and seizing key high ground. Simultaneously, the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) conducted a deliberate attack with no preparatory fires at beach Z, with the intent of cutting the Cape Helles peninsula in two and isolating and fixing the Ottoman army on the Cape. In conjunction with these landings, a feint was conducted at the Gulf of Xeros by the Royal Navy, and the French conducted a demonstration followed by a raid on the Asiatic side at Kum Kale.28

Against all odds, the allies established a foothold and limited lodgement at each entry point. They did so by presenting Ottoman forces with multiple dilemmas to react to. Sanders later wrote about his experience early on April 25 and the rapid succession of reports on enemy landings that bombarded his headquarters: “From the many pale faces among the officers reporting in the early morning it became apparent that although a hostile landing had been expected with certainty, a landing at so many places surprised many and filled them with apprehension.”29 Sanders and his subordinate commanders struggled to develop a common operational picture and response to the landings. Eventually, effective individual leadership exercised at the direct level halted the allied advances. The most famous example was Ottoman Lieutenant Colonel Mustafa Kemal Ataturk’s (later the first president of Turkey) order to his men: “I don’t order you to attack, I order you to die. In the time which passes until we die other troops and commanders can take our places.”30

Sanders, following Ataturk’s example, threw successive wave after wave of counterattacks against all the allied landing points, seeking to drive them back into the sea. In response, Hamilton, reverting to what military leaders of the time knew best, informed his men, “You have got through the difficult business, now you have only to dig, dig, dig, until you are safe.”31 In testimony to the effectiveness of joint fires and how it shaped the battlefield, Sanders ordered his men to establish their trenches as close as possible to the allies to negate any fires arrayed against them.32 Once dug in, fires from the ships had little effect, since they could only fire in depth and not linearly along a trench line. Soon the fronts solidified and assumed the character seen in other theaters of World War I.

The entire Gallipoli campaign is often called a failure, with distinct critique being leveled against the initial landings and their lost opportunities. However, considering that Hamilton had almost no knowledge of the enemy situation, poor maps, no deterrence options, and faced an entrenched enemy who both outnumbered and expected him, the initial entries achieved their objective of establishing lodgements for subsequent operations. Hamilton accomplished this by presenting the enemy with multiple dilemmas to react to. The various deliberate attacks—feint, demonstration, and raid—when combined, presented the Ottomans with a situation they struggled to comprehend, which prevented them from immediately marshaling their overwhelming combat power to counter. Had the allies landed on one or two beaches, the Ottomans would have easily repelled them. The effectiveness of presenting an adversary with multiple dilemmas to offset advantages is a valid lesson for today’s joint force.

Logistics and Consolidation of Gains
Joint doctrine recognizes that a joint forcible entry’s main objective is to seize and hold a lodgement as a base for subsequent operations. This foothold is meant to receive large follow-on forces and the logistics to support them.33 Army doctrine has recently introduced the concept of the consolidation of gains—activities to ensure that any tem-
Temporary operational success is enduring and to set the conditions for the joint force to exploit it. In a forcible entry context, these consolidation activities primarily deal with defending the lodgement, landing and building combat power, and the logistics to support it. Hamilton set about doing exactly that; his first dispatch stated that all time immediately after the landing “was consequently spent in straightening the line, and in consolidating and strengthening the positions gained.”

Though the initial landings were a success, the attempts to move inland failed. One of the main reasons for this was the inability to consolidate gains and build logistics nodes to support follow-on forces. One witness later described the scenes on the beaches and how they “reminded one irresistibly of a gigantic shipwreck.” The commission report found many faults with the sustainment activities during and immediately after the landings. Hamilton himself acknowledged how logistics hampered his ability to move off the beaches, writing, “The men were exhausted . . . the small amount of transport available did not suffice to maintain the supply of munitions, and cartridges were running short despite all efforts to push them up from the landing places.”

The commission faulted the extended lines of communication and poor packing of supplies as being behind the failed sustainment plan. Material packed in Alexandria, Egypt, was repacked for the invasion on the staging islands of Lemnos and Mudros. While this is a common practice, the supplies were not combat loaded or prioritized by need. Consequently, the force was unable to access supplies needed to consolidate its gains in the lodgements. Though the logistics officers were later criticized, the commission found they were not at fault. The real reason for the stowage failure “was the absence of knowledge of the operations for which the embarkation was required, and that the embarkation officers at the ports of loading were not to blame.”

Hamilton was unable to resupply his forces quickly enough, which resulted in them culminating soon after landing. His immediate response was to solidify the lines, consolidate his gains, and allow his logistics support to sort itself. By then, however, the Ottomans had recovered from the multiple dilemmas presented and effectively halted further advances. A slug-fest ensued over the next 8 months, as the allies attempted to break the deadlock, move up the peninsula, and seize key terrain that had been expected to fall on the first day of the landings. Hamilton excluded his logistics officers in preplanning events, with disastrous consequences. Had they known the scheme of maneuver, they could have better prepacked the ships to support it. A valuable lesson exists for joint force planners considering future forcible entries: include all joint functions during planning activities.
Health Service Support Concept
During large-scale combat operations, a valid health service support (HSS) plan will prevent a force from culminating. This was understood in World War I, as noted in a British field manual from the era that is still applicable today within the MDO concept: “The presence of a number of sick and wounded proves an encumbrance to a Commander, and since his mobility will be handicapped by being compelled to carry a number of unfit men, every effort is made to remove them to the lines of communication with all despatch.”

The HSS plan for the landings was simple: as the lodgements were secured and the force advanced, casualty clearing stations, ambulance units, and field hospitals would be established. Evacuation would occur via the ambulances through the clearing stations, to the field hospitals, and then via barges to hospital ships, just as in other theaters. The plan hinged on immediate success on the beaches.

As discussed, the rigidity of Hamilton’s scheme of maneuver preordained that all objectives would be accomplished as planned. Medical authorities were told that the Turks would be quickly driven off the beach and room made for hospitals ashore. However, as the Dardanelles commission highlighted, this “presupposed success, but better provision ought to have been made for the contingency of failure.”

Medical planners did account for a slight lapse in coverage as troops landed and moved inland, but they did not factor in that this might take days rather than hours or that adequate space for hospital units would not become available.

“Hardly any advance was made after the landing, and it was found impossible to carry out the evacuation as intended” began the commission’s description of the actual execution of the HSS plan. It continued, “it therefore became necessary that all casualties should be evacuated by sea as soon as possible. The casualties began at the very outset of the landing, and many of them occurred in the boat before the men had disembarked. It was impossible to sort the cases as had been intended, and they could not be left on the beaches, which were under shell fire.” Consequently, the wounded were immediately loaded on any ship of opportunity, without triage, to transport them to the hospital ships, which then removed that asset to transport more fighting men ashore.

Like the sustainment preparation, the reason why the HSS plan was found lacking was medical authorities’ exclusion during planning activities. The commission was highly critical of Hamilton, who did not inform his surgeon general of the possible risks on the beaches. This resulted in inaccurate casualty estimates and a misunderstanding of how to support the landings with medical assets.

As the lines solidified, the force health protection (FHP) plan was also found to be wanting. Dysentery, typhoid, diarrhea, gangrene, and later frostbite—all easily preventable—devastated the ranks.

The official history of the war published by the Australian government issued a charge that no medical military planner ever wants to hear. It claimed the men lost their faith in their leaders mainly due to the lapse in medical coverage for both the HSS and FHP plans. In their defence, medical support was always an afterthought in Hamilton’s mind and the surgeons general were never kept fully informed of operational plans. In addition, expectation management, always the bane of medical authorities, was present at Gallipoli. One surgeon later wrote in frustration, “If you are going to expect to have at a place like ANZAC all the arrangements one expects at St. Thomas’s Hospital, you will not get them, and I cannot understand anyone expecting them.”

Finally, planners also had no historical precedence to draw from; as noted by the ANZAC Surgeon General Neville Howse: “We were in the unfortunate position of having no history to guide us of a previous landing on such a large scale in modern times, so that we could get no idea of what medical arrangements should have been made.”

Five of the six principles of joint health services—proximity, flexibility, mobility, continuity, and control—were present at Gallipoli. What was missing was the HSS plan’s conformance to the tactical plan, which today is recognized as the most basic element for providing effective HSS. Since medical planners never initially understood the tactical plan, they prepared no contingencies. The Australian official history concluded that in Hamilton’s staff planning, “Whatever suffering, disillusionment, and loss was caused by the absence of medical arrangements was due to this obsession . . . that the presence of the ‘operations’ branch was in some way more important than that of the ‘administrative’ branch [which included medical].”

As with sustainment, joint planners must understand the importance of including medical treatment throughout all planning activities; furthermore, joint medical planners must aggressively advocate for their function and resist marginalization. Failure to do so will have disastrous consequences for the joint force in any forcible entry attempt.

Conclusion
Until only recently, Gallipoli was a synonym for a military debacle at all levels of war. The Dardanelles Commission’s final report did acknowledge that though none of the campaign’s objectives were reached, it succeeded in diverting forces that would have otherwise been used to face Russia, it influenced the Balkan States either to remain neutral or delayed them in joining the Central Powers, and also occupied a large part of the Ottoman forces that could have been used elsewhere. The report also concluded that the operation could have succeeded had it been treated as the main effort rather than as support to the events on the Western Front.

When examined through the prism of trench warfare that dominated military thought in other theaters of World War I, as stated by renowned historian Alan Moorehead, “the Gallipoli campaign was no longer a blunder or a reckless gamble; it was the most imaginative conception of the war, and its potentialities were almost beyond reckoning.” As Hamilton and numerous others stated in their testimony to the commission, this was the greatest amphibious
operation ever undertaken in the annals of warfare up to that point that attempted to synchronize ground, sea, subsurface, air, and multinational forces. As such, they had zero historical precedence to draw from and were learning as they went. Churchill himself later conceded, “To land a large army in the face of a long-warned and carefully prepared defence by brave troops and modern weapons was to attempt what had never yet been dared and what might well prove impossible.”

The negative memory of the attempted joint forcible entry at Gallipoli influenced military thought in the interwar years. As written in the doctrine of the time, by the 1920s it was believed that, due to events in the Dardanelles and the high death tolls caused by technology, “Descents upon a hostile coast, if opposed, have a very small chance of success, particularly in modern times. It is true that the landing may be made, but getting away from the coast is the difficulty.”

Interestingly enough, in the interwar years, as the Marine Corps worked to reinvent itself and become experts at amphibious operations, the Gallipoli Campaign was studied profusely, becoming the main catalyst behind the creation of the Marine’s first doctrine on the subject, the Tentative Landing Operations Manual. The concepts introduced in this manual went on to influence World War II operations, including the largest joint forcible entry operation to date—the landings at Normandy.

Overall, events from World War I are often remembered for the careless loss of life on an industrial scale, which leaders on all sides were unable to fully comprehend or prevent. However, the war still offers modern military professionals several lessons—earned through the massive expenditure of blood and treasure of an entire generation—that can be applied today. Fortunately, unlike our World War I predecessors, modern day joint planners have numerous historical forcible entry examples to learn from, which should not be wasted.

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**Notes**

4. Ibid., I-9, GL-16.
5. JP 3-18, II-1.
7. Ibid., 10.
8. Ibid., 21.
12. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., 25.
21. Ibid.
23. Ibid., 78.
24. JP 3-0, VIII-14.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid., 100.
29. Sanders, Five Years in Turkey, 63.
31. Ian Hamilton, Gallipoli Diary, Vol. I