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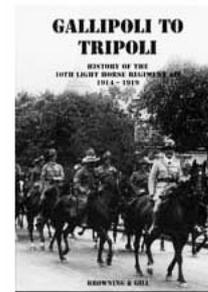
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Gallipoli to Tripoli: history of the 10th Light Horse Regiment 1914-1919

by Neville Browning and Ian Gill



Hesperian Press: Victoria Park, Western Australia; revised edition, 2012; 648 pp.; ISBN 978-0-85905-515-4; RRP \$95.00 (hard back); Ursula Davidson Library call number 570.2 BROW 2012

This impressive book details the story of a distinguished Western Australian light horse regiment, the 10th Light Horse Regiment, Australian Imperial Force, which served on operations in the Middle East throughout World War I. It combines a scholarly overview of the Regiment's military operations with an extensive collection of photographs taken during the Regiment's two campaigns, all enhanced by the very high quality of the presentation – hence the book's unusually high price.

The finished product provides a fascinating written and visual insight into a nearly forgotten world – the operations of a mounted infantry regiment when fighting dismounted on Gallipoli and when mounted during its extensive campaign in Egypt, Palestine and Syria, including at famous locations such as Gaza, Beersheba and Jerusalem.

The 10th Light Horse is said to have epitomised the dash and insouciance of the mounted Australian soldier in the Great War. The Regiment was raised in Perth in October 1914. Its baptism of fire was on the Gallipoli peninsula in 1915 where it fought dismounted and suffered heavy casualties, especially during its assaults at The Neck and Hill 60 during the August offensives. Back in Egypt after the withdrawal from Gallipoli, the Regiment was reunited with its horses and went on to serve in the long advance from the Suez Canal to Aleppo through Sinai, Palestine and Syria from 1916 to 1918, including the capture of Jerusalem. In early 1919, before returning to Australia, the Regiment was also called on to help suppress the Egyptian Uprising against British rule.

A strong appeal of the book is that it combines extensive scholarly research into the official military archives (including previously-published 10th Light Horse regimental histories), with numerous personal anecdotes and photographs of those who served with the Regiment. In particular, it draws on the regimental history of the 10th Light Horse by Arthur Olden which was first published in 1921 and has long been out-of-print.

The text is well written and the excellent photographs are embedded logically into the text along with clearly drawn battle maps. At the end are appended over 190 pages of personal details such as embarkation

rolls, decorations and citations, casualty lists sequenced by operations, and over 90 pages of individual photographs of the Regiment's officers and men. There is also an extensive array of references and notes and a comprehensive bibliography.

The book is written in two 'halves'. In the first part (the opening seven chapters), Ian Gill presents the causes and social settings of World War I, then discusses the raising of the Regiment and its deeds during the Gallipoli campaign. In the second part (nine chapters), Neville Browning describes the Regiment's exploits in the deserts of Egypt, Palestine and Syria. The two parts blend seamlessly and complement each other well – to the degree that if the authors had not emphasised the difference in the preface, the transition would have been very difficult to detect. Both authors have an incredible eye for detail. They select the military events to report very well, and they enhance their reports with interesting photographs and 'human insight' stories illustrating aspects such as the camaraderie between men and horses, and the tensions and challenges of everyday life in a regiment at war in very challenging physical environments.

Two photographs in particular attracted my interest. The first was an excellent photograph of the Regimental horses and troopers entering Jerusalem (p. 324); and the second captured the heartfelt poignancy of a 10th Light Horse sergeant shooting his own horse after it was decided that no horses could be taken back to Australia at the end of the war (p. 436).

Overall, the book appealed to me because of the attractive combination of its excellent analysis and presentation of the 10th Light Horse story; its many unique photographs of Great War era Australian military operations abroad; and the accompanying insightful commentaries on the underlying social and military attitudes prevailing at the time.

I recommend this attractively-presented book not only to descendants of the participants and Western Australians more generally, but also to scholars and others wanting to study the operations of a famous Australian light horse regiment when campaigning both on the Gallipoli peninsula and in the deserts of Egypt, Palestine and Syria during the Great War.

Michael Hough