Battle of Gallipoli:

The Gallipoli Campaign of 1915-16, also known as the Battle of Gallipoli or the Dardanelles Campaign, was an unsuccessful attempt by the Allied Powers to control the sea route from Europe to Russia during World War I. The campaign began with a failed naval attack by British and French ships on the Dardanelles Straits in February-March 1915 and continued with a major land invasion of the Gallipoli Peninsula on April 25, involving British and French troops as well as divisions of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC). Lack of sufficient intelligence and knowledge of the terrain, along with a fierce Turkish resistance, hampered the success of the invasion. By mid-October, Allied forces had suffered heavy casualties and had made little headway from their initial landing sites. Evacuation began in December 1915 and was completed early the following January.

With Allied casualties in the Gallipoli Campaign mounting, Hamilton (with Churchill’s support) petitioned Kitchener for 95,000 reinforcements; the war secretary offered barely a quarter of that number. In mid-October, Hamilton argued that a proposed evacuation of the peninsula would cost up to 50 percent casualties; British authorities subsequently recalled him and installed Sir Charles Monro in his place. By early November, Kitchener had visited the region himself and agreed with Monro’s recommendation that the remaining 105,000 Allied troops should be evacuated.

The British government authorized the evacuation to begin from Sulva Bay on December 7; the last troops left Helles on January 9, 1916. In all, some 480,000 Allied forces took part in the Gallipoli Campaign, at a cost of more than 250,000 casualties, including some 46,000 dead. On the Turkish side, the campaign also cost an estimated 250,000 casualties, with 65,000 killed.

Gallipoli Sea Invasion:

With [World War I](https://www.history.com/topics/world-war-i) stalled on the Western Front by 1915, the Allied Powers were debating going on the offensive in another region of the conflict, rather than continuing with attacks in Belgium and France. Early that year, Russia’s Grand Duke Nicholas appealed to Britain for aid in confronting a Turkish invasion in the Caucasus. (The [Ottoman Empire](https://www.history.com/topics/ottoman-empire) had entered World War I on the side of the Central Powers, Germany and Austria-Hungary, by November 1914.) In response, the Allies decided to launch a naval expedition to seize the Dardanelles Straits, a narrow passage connecting the Aegean Sea to the Sea of Marmara in northwestern Turkey. If successful, capture of the straits would allow the Allies to link up with the Russians in the Black Sea, where they could work together to knock Turkey out of the war.

Spearheaded by the first lord of the British Admiralty, Winston Churchill (over the strong opposition of the First Sea Lord Admiral John Fisher, head of the British Navy), the naval attack on the Dardanelles began with a long-range bombardment by British and French battleships on February 19, 1915. Turkish forces abandoned their outer forts but met the approaching Allied minesweepers with heavy fire, stalling the advance. Under tremendous pressure to renew the attack, Admiral Sackville Carden, the British naval commander in the region, suffered a nervous collapse and was replaced by Vice-Admiral Sir John de Robeck. On March 18, 18 Allied battleships entered the straits; Turkish fire, including undetected mines, sank three of the ships and severely damaged three others.

Gallipoli land invasion:

In the wake of the failed naval attack, preparations began for largescale troop landings on the Gallipoli Peninsula. British War Secretary Lord Kitchener appointed General Ian Hamilton as commander of British forces for the operation; under his command, troops from Australia, New Zealand and the French colonies assembled with British forces on the Greek island of Lemnos. Meanwhile, the Turks boosted their defenses under the command of the German general Liman von Sanders, who began positioning Ottoman troops along the shore where he expected the landings would take place. On April 25, 1915, the Allies launched their invasion of the Gallipoli Peninsula. Despite suffering heavy casualties, they managed to establish two beachheads: at Helles on the peninsula’s southern tip, and at Gaba Tepe on the Aegean coast.

After the initial landing, the Allies were able to make little progress from their initial landing sites, even as the Turks gathered more and more troops on the peninsula from both the [Palestine](https://www.history.com/topics/palestine) and Caucasus fronts. In an attempt to break the stalemate, the Allies made another major troop landing on August 6 at Sulva Bay, combined with a northward advance from Anzac Cove towards the heights at Sari Bair and a diversionary action at Helles. The surprise landings at Sulva Bay proceeded against little opposition, but Allied indecision and delay stalled their progress in all three locations, allowing Ottoman reinforcements to arrive and shore up their defenses.