

The Military History Society of NSW presents:



THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN CRISIS 1908–1918

Decade of Tumult

A Lecture by Military Historian David Wilson

10:30AM Saturday, 1 May 2021

ANZAC forces first encountered soldiers of the Ottoman Army on the Gallipoli Peninsula on the morning of 25 April 1915. ‘Johnny Turk’ as he came to be known, proved to be a stubborn opponent and skilled fighter defending his homeland, but less widely known is why the Ottoman Empire as whole was fighting alongside Germany and Austria-Hungary. Together, these three empires made up the Central Powers of World War One.

Military historian and author David Wilson will speak on what was arguably the most turbulent decade of reform and consequence in the Ottoman Empire. We will look at the strategic position of the empire at the beginning of the 20th Century and see why it was known as ‘The Sick Man of Europe’ and what factors influenced the structure of the Ottoman armed forces during this critical period. We will also look at several strategic level leaders and also the humble, but stalwart “*mehmet*” (foot soldier) who fought in a multiplicity of campaigns across the vast Ottoman Empire of the day.

This will be an enlightening exposé on one of Australia’s most significant, but little-known wartime opponents. David will put into context the Ottoman Empire’s major military conflicts between July 1908 when the Young Turks seized power and October 1918 when the Empire finally collapsed. This dissolution of empire had profound effects on the creation of the state of Turkey and other countries in the Middle East which are still being felt today.

VENUE: The Auditorium, Anzac Memorial Hyde Park, Hyde Park South, corner Elizabeth and Liverpool Streets, Sydney CBD. Admission is free of charge but a donation would be appreciated. For further information call 0419 698 783 or email: president@militaryhistorynsw.com.au.

Biography – Lt-Col (Ret'd) David Wilson



Lieutenant-Colonel (Ret'd) David Wilson, BA (Military Studies) UNSW, MSc (Instructional Systems Design) Florida State University USA, psc (n), jssc.

David Wilson graduated from the Royal Military College, Duntroon in 1975 into the Royal Australian Infantry Corps. He completed 47 years of service in a variety of Regular Army and Army Reserve postings before retiring in 2019. His overseas postings included duty in Uganda with the Commonwealth Military Training Team (1983) and in Cambodia with the United Nations UNAMIC and UNTAC missions (1991-92). In 2006-07 he was deployed as an operations analyst in both Iraq and Afghanistan, working out of the Australian Joint Task Force HQ in Baghdad. He also served as the Australian Liaison Officer to the USMC-led headquarters and with other international assistance forces based in Thailand during the tsunami relief operation in 2004-05.

David's keen interest for military history is long-standing and widely varied. This includes being involved as a specialist technical adviser to the movies *Breaker Morant* and *Gallipoli* which were filmed in South Australia in the early 1980s where he was posted at the time. He has been regularly guiding as a battlefield historian since 2006. His specialty areas for WW1 tours are Gallipoli, France and Belgium. He also covers the Bombing of Darwin in 1942 and the Battle of Agincourt 1415. In 2017 he became a fully Accredited Member of the International Guild of Battlefield Guides (Badge No 81). He is a member of the Gallipoli Memorial Club, a member of the NSW Chapter of the American Civil War Round Table and is a committee member of the 18th Battalion Memorial Rifle Club at Hornsby. He is also a member of the Victoria Barracks Paddington Corps of Guides.

As well as being a battlefield guide, David is a published author and is the co-author of *Fighting Nineteenth - History of the 19th Infantry Battalion, AIF*, published in June 2011. As a result of this work, he has set up his own business AIF Research Services which assists families and other interested groups to track their First AIF ancestors. David is a lecturer in military history at WEA Sydney and also gives presentations to local historical societies on a variety of military history topics.