

from historians, this book has generally met its stated brief and will be of value for some years to come to students and the interested public as an accessible introduction to New Zealand foreign affairs from 1990 to 2005.

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Forgotten ANZACS: The Campaign in Greece, 1941. By Peter Ewer. Scribe Publications, Melbourne, 2008. 419pp. NZ price: \$69.99. ISBN 978-1-92121529-2.

THE 1941 CAMPAIGN IN GREECE abounds with interesting strategic and political issues, acts of great bravery and poor decision-making, and includes that most intriguing of 'near run things', the battle for Crete. All too often Australian authors have tended to overlook the 'NZ' in 'ANZAC'. Peter Ewer, the author of *Forgotten ANZACS: The Campaign in Greece, 1941* cannot be accused of this. Throughout this book he deals with Australians and New Zealanders in a balanced way. This approach results in some useful insights. Ewer clearly demonstrates, for example, how similar the experiences of the men and women of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and the Second New Zealand Expeditionary Force (2NZEF) were in their first major campaign in the Second World War. It is this Australasian viewpoint that makes this book a significant contribution to the substantial historiography of the Greek campaign.

Ewer begins by examining the rundown state of the Australian and New Zealand military forces on the eve of the Second World War, and by introducing the small group of veterans whose oral testimony forms an important element of the book. He then discusses the raising of the AIF and 2NZEF. He succinctly sets out the equipment, training and other problems the new generation of Anzacs faced between 1939 and 1941. The background to the British decision to send a force to aid Greece, which features so many instances of misjudgement, wishful thinking and shoddy analysis, is well described by Ewer. From a New Zealand perspective, it is unfortunate that he does not make use of Ian Wards's thoughtful chapter, 'The Balkan Dilemma' in *Kia Kaha: New Zealand in the Second World War*. Wards clearly sets out the thoroughly unsatisfactory background to the New Zealand decision to commit its division to what was from the outset a highly risky and questionable undertaking.

Much of *Forgotten ANZACS* is devoted to the experiences of ordinary soldiers in the front line, which Ewer handles in an assured way. He also successfully deals with high-level issues such as the performance of the senior allied commanders in the campaign. He is rightly critical of commander of the British and Dominion forces in Greece, Lieutenant-General (later Field Marshal) Henry Maitland 'Jumbo' Wilson, whose career in the British Army is a remarkable monument to mediocrity. He reserves his harshest criticism, however, for the Australian commander Lieutenant-General (later Field Marshal) Thomas Blamey. Ewer considers that Blamey was in several key respects an ineffective commander of the ill-fated Anzac Corps. He is scathing about Blamey's decision to take advantage of an opportunity to leave Greece prematurely and to take his son, who was an officer on his staff, with him. Ewer contrasts the way Blamey abandoned his men with Freyberg's dismissive response to an order that he too should leave Greece in the midst of fierce fighting involving his division. Ewer's assessment of Freyberg's conduct of the battle for Crete is a little simplistic and fails, in particular, to properly assess the impact command failures within the New Zealand Division had on the course of events.

Ewer makes good use of a wide range of published sources, a significant number of papers from the Australian War Memorial and a few papers from Archives New

Zealand. There are, however, some significant New Zealand works missing from Ewer's bibliography. His discussion of 21 Battalion's role in the defence of the Pinios Gorge would, for instance, have been more robust if he had taken note of John McLeod's analysis of this action in *Myth and Reality: The New Zealand Soldier in World War II*.

Forgotten ANZACS is a nicely produced hardback book with a useful range of photographs, including a selection of images taken during the Second World War and recently of veterans of the campaign that the author interviewed as part of his research. There are 15 fairly basic maps, which effectively complement the text. Unfortunately, the book's index, although generally comprehensive, fails to include a number of significant individuals mentioned in the text.

Peter Ewer has a lively and highly readable style, and this combined with the gripping nature of the first-hand accounts included in the book make it easy and enjoyable to read. *Forgotten ANZACS* provides Australians and New Zealanders with a lively and accessible introduction to the part played by their forces in the Greek campaign, and it is not at all surprising that it has sold well on both sides of the Tasman.

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Dark Journey: Three New Zealand Battles of the Western Front. By Glyn Harper. HarperCollins, Auckland, 2007. 544pp. NZ price: \$49.99. ISBN 978-1-86950-579-0.

BOOKS ABOUT FRACTIONS of the British Army should be accompanied by a warning: does this book claim that this corps or that division or those battalions, either won the war, won a major battle, stopped the Germans in their tracks or performed any other feat beyond what their reasonably small numbers might be expected to accomplish?

In this book Glyn Harper, who is rapidly establishing himself as the doyen of New Zealand military historians of the Great War, considers the New Zealand Division's contribution to three episodes — Passchendaele, the German spring offensives of 1918 and the battle of Bapaume in August 1918.

At Passchendaele, the New Zealand Division took part in the best of times (if such a phrase can be used regarding the Western Front) and the worst of times. On 4 October, as part of II Anzac Corps, the New Zealanders helped deliver a smashing blow to the Germans at Broodseinde. This was the last success engineered by General Plumer and mainly relied on his use of massive amounts of artillery. Glyn Harper describes all this with clarity and verve and avoids attributing the entire success of the battle to the New Zealand Division, while bringing out what a considerable role it played in that success. The worst of times soon followed. The New Zealanders were asked to take part in the disasters of Poelcapelle and the first battle of Passchendaele on 9 and 12 October respectively. By this time the weather had turned, the battlefield a sea of mud, the artillery blinded by these conditions and failure inevitable. On 12 October the New Zealanders suffered more casualties than any other day in their military history.

Harper rightly bemoans the fact that these episodes are not better known and understood in New Zealand history. His book, it may be added, will go some way towards correcting that deficit. In his conclusion of these dreadful episodes (again clearly and succinctly described) Harper is perhaps too judicious. He tries to find a reason for battling on in these hopeless conditions in the vulnerable state of the French Army and the Italians. This is to overreach. The French had already recovered from their acts of collective indiscipline earlier in 1917 and had mounted a successful attack of their own. As for the Italians, they too had steadied, but the attrition of the best army in the field (the British) in circumstances where they were not doing much harm to the Germans could hardly help