

STRATEGY IN WAR – Jill Curry

Australian Curriculum, Year 9 – ACDSEH095

To defeat an enemy in war, you have to win the battle in the mind before you win the battle on the ground. This is where the military strategists come in. The most (only) successful part of the Gallipoli campaign for the Allies was the evacuation of the troops. Not a man was lost when over two nights thousands of soldiers departed from the peninsular. How was this possible?



One diversion was a cricket match played under shell fire at ‘Shell Green’, the only relatively flat part of ground, on December 17th 1915 to make the Turks think that all was well with the Allies, while they were planning their escape. In the month or so prior to departure they had had periods of silence where no gun was fired, to condition the Turks that the warfare was not constant. Australian Lance Corporal W. C.

Scurry invented an ingenious device to deceive the enemy that the troops were still there, when they had already left. The ‘Drip’ (or Pop off) rifle fired automatically via a weight attached to the trigger. One kerosene tin with a small hole in the bottom slowly dripped water into another tin placed below which was attached to the string which fired the gun when the weight became heavy enough.



In the Middle East a letter was written, and intentionally dropped for the Turks to find, which outlined the impossibility of an attack on Beersheba due to the lack of water in the desert and Gaza was heavily bombed from the sea in the days prior to the attack on Beersheba. All of this was to convince the Turks that the next attack (like the previous two unsuccessful ones) would occur at Gaza, so keeping the main focus at the Mediterranean end of the cordon while attacking the other end 45 km inland. The breakthrough at Beersheba was successful because the German officers never expected the Light Horse regiments to charge. It was their custom to ride to near the battle front then to dismount and fight as infantry on foot. They were waiting for the horsemen to follow their normal pattern and when they realised that they were not going to stop, their ammunition was exploding behind the line of horses galloping rapidly towards them. Surprise and speed won the day – and maybe a bit of Divine help also.



Another clever idea used in the Jordan valley was to set up simple wooden frames with hessian over them to look like horses to confuse the aircraft as to where the military camps actually were.

According to Roland Perry, the night before the attack was made to break the Turkish line north of Jaffa in September 1918 which began the 'Great Ride' to Damascus and beyond, a diversionary horse race was held near Jericho. This used horses that were not required for the following day and attracted a sizeable crowd of onlookers. The idea was firstly to keep the attention on the eastern front when the attack was planned for the other side of the country near the sea, and also to deceive the Turks of the imminent timing of the attack. With such an event, who would expect that a few hours later before dawn the next day, a major onslaught was to occur?

Winning is not always about the greatest talent or the biggest army. It takes ingenuity and strategy to outwit the enemy, then preparation and discipline to carry out the plan successfully.

Questions:

1. Have you developed life goals and strategies to achieve these?
2. Do you have the character, determination, endurance and discipline, to reach your goals? How would developing ANZAC values (sacrifice, perseverance, courage, mateship, initiative) help you to succeed in life?
3. Today psychologists are employed in sports teams to help players develop strategies, attitudes and goals to bring success. What is needed for a team to win? Are you a good team player?

Pictures:

1. Australian War Memorial <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/G01289/>, Photo by Charles Bean, Dec 17, 1915. A game of cricket was played on Shell Green in an attempt to distract the Turks from the imminent departure of allied troops. Major George Macarthur Onslow of the Light Horse in batting, is being caught out. Shells were passing overhead all the time the game was in progress.
2. https://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/gallipoli/drip_rifle/
3. Disputed picture of the charge at Beersheba (or re-enactment) – Australian War memorial <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/A02684/>. It was probably taken when two regiments of the 4th Brigade, Australian Light Horse, re-enacted the charge for the official photographer Frank Hurley, at Belah on 7 February 1918.
4. Dummy horses used to fool German aircraft – Australian War Memorial <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/B02667/>

Powerpoint

1. <http://www.5elementsrepo.com/2012/11/nature-of-strategies-and-strategic-management/>
2. Australian War Memorial <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/G01289/>, Photo by Charles Bean, Dec 17, 1915.
3. https://www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/gallipoli/drip_rifle/
4. Letter – Imperial War Museum <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/history/world-war-one/inside-first-world-war/part-ten/10863689/why-first-world-war-letters-censored.html>.
<http://folegattiadvocacia.com.br/css/an-old-envelope>
5. Disputed picture of the charge at Beersheba (or re-enactment) – Australian War memorial <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/A02684/>. It was probably taken when two regiments of the 4th Brigade, Australian Light Horse, re-enacted the charge for the official photographer Frank Hurley, at Belah on 7 February 1918.
6. Dummy horses used to fool German aircraft – Australian War Memorial <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/B02667/>
7. <https://www.dreamstime.com/royalty-free-stock-image-vision-strategy-plan-text-d-red-blue-green-arrows-image29799516>