

## Dr. Maria Hill:

**“If any country can claim a historical connection to the Anzac Centenary it is Greece”**



**O**n Wednesday, 29 April 2015, Dr Maria Hill\* was invited by the Greek Ambassador in Canberra to give a talk for the opening of the art exhibition “Lemnos – the Greek dimension in the Anzac Centenary”. Military Historian Dr Maria Hill spoke about Lemnos and her historical connection to the ANZAC Gallipoli expedition. At the event the Ambassador presented Dr Maria Hill with an award for her contribution to Hellenism as a military historian.

The exhibition included work of fourteen Greek-Australian artists with subject of inspiration Lemnos and her historic connection with the Anzac Centenary curated by Mrs. Eva T. Dafaranos. Participating artists: Olga Cironis, George Raftopoulos, Athena Xenakis, George Comino, Alexandra Danalis, Dean Manning, Ros Psakis, Stephen Caldis, Peter Michalandros, Stella Karydiotou, Nick Bonovas, Karen Barbouttis, George Zindilis, Eva (Eyvah) T. Dafaranos.

Below is a section of Dr Maria Hill’s talk: «Lemnos, with its support of the Dardanelles campaign by its supply of Greek labour, drinking water from the island’s desalination plant and local produce for the field kitchens, as well as animals, including mules and donkeys for the frontline, played a significant part in the Gallipoli story, that should be acknowledged and included in Australia’s history of the Gallipoli campaign. The enduring link that was forged at Lemnos between Anzacs and Greeks in 1915 deserves to be recognised and honoured as part of the ANZAC Centenary. To conclude, I would like to share a comment made by an academic at the Gallipoli Conference that took place from 18-20, that some of you may have attended here in Canberra at the Australian National University. He maintained that members of the ethnic communities in Australia are not interested in the Anzac Centenary and the commemoration of Gallipoli. As I pointed

out to then and now, it is not that they are not interested but that they are not included in the Anzac Story and the Greeks certainly want to be remembered for their role in the Anzac story. From the Greek point of view, the Anzacs were stationed in Lemnos in 1915 and later Salonika and they returned again in 1941 to fight in the battle of Greece and Crete. So if any country can claim a historical connection to the Anzac Centenary it is Greece.»

### \* Dr Maria Hill

President of the Society of Women Writers NSW is a professional historian with expertise in military history, particularly the Greek and Crete campaigns of 1941. She has an Honours, Masters and PhD in History from the University of New South Wales and is the first Australian historian of Greek descent to write about these campaigns. Her book, “Diggers and Greeks: The Australian Campaigns in Greece and Crete” was shortlisted in 2010 for the Queensland Premier’s Literary Awards. She is the author of an award winning history teaching publication, Federation: Inclusion and Exclusion for the NSW Department of Education and training that earned her a State and a National Discovery Democracy Award as well as a Commonwealth Centenary Medal for her contribution to education. Formerly, a Visiting fellow at Australian Defence Force Academy, a judge of the NSW Premier’s History Prize, Guest Speaker & Workshop presenter at the Brisbane Writers Festival and Managing Editor of the Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism at Macquarie University. Currently she is researching a new book on the Anzacs in Salonika 1915 -1919 that includes Lemnos island, as part of a broader study on the Balkan Front.

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