

PREFACE

Being among the bloodiest battlefronts during World War 1, Gallipoli Peninsula and the Dardanelles (Çanakkale) province, witnessed an epic defence, a nation's struggle for life, and an extraordinary military strategy. The Dardanelles Naval Campaign and subsequently Gallipoli Land Campaign ended up with casualties of more than 500,000 on both sides. Starting with the naval operations in the Dardanelles Campaign, after 28 days of resistance against British, French, and Australian forces, 3 leading battleships, Bouvet (French), Irresistible (British) and Ocean (British) out of nearly 100 with various missions were hit and sunk while all the others withdrew on 18th of March 1915. During the successive land operations hundreds of marine vessels were sunk. Up to now 7 submarines, 4 battleships, 2 minesweepers, 1 cruiseship, 1 cargoship, and 6 landing crafts of Allies, and 1 gunboat, 1 cargoship, 2 cruiseships, 1 sailboat, 3 battleships of Turks were discovered in the depths between 3 m to 74 m in Turkish waters.

These shipwrecks, resting for 108 years, have been the temples, for commemorating one of the deadliest campaigns of WW1. The graves of thousands are now the sorrowful cultural heritage structures, serving people to feel the cold, bloodcurdling side of the great war.

On the other hand, a 108 years long accumulation of marine organisms all over the shipwrecks turn them into biodiversity hotspots. Like an oasis in the desert, they present a colourful life over the sandy bottoms. Performing as reefs, once deadly colossal war machines are now havens for hundreds of living organisms.

In terms of marine ecology, Çanakkale has always been important by its location on the route of many migrating species and due to its productive protected vicinity Saros Bay. However, the reefs formed in 108 years, now have their own stories at the background. Gallipoli Historic Underwater Park was established for people to see this unique blend of historical facts and natural beauties.

In the formation process of this book, we strive to gather multidisciplinary colleagues together. The shipwrecks of Gallipoli had been evaluated; as cultural heritages, as touristic destinations, as recreational and technical diving spots, from the military perspective, as obstacles causing ghost fishing, and finally as the marine sanctuaries. We are grateful to the colleagues for their contributions.

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