

Classification >

History / Australian History

Little is known about the real reasons that Australia committed troops to Greece. Australian historians have, for too long, neglected the Greek and Crete campaigns, and what has been written until now has ignored the Greek side of the story. Never before has the impact of fifth-column activity on Australia's military relationship with Greece been investigated.

This compelling book combines details of the campaigns with an account of the response of Greeks and Cretans to the Allied forces on their soil. It reveals the personal relations that developed between Australian soldiers and Greek civilians and soldiers; these were sometimes hostile but in other cases developed into friendships that lasted decades after the war had finished. Maria Hill has trawled through archives in Athens and Canberra to show that while miscommunication between the Greek General Staff and the allied forces was frequent, the situation on the ground was far more complex. Her book also shows why the campaigns on mainland Greece and Crete compelled people to behave in altruistic ways, even when it meant placing themselves in danger. It proves that it is possible to form successful relations with people of a completely different culture in conflict situations, and that those relationships are important and should be nurtured, as they are vital to the wellbeing of all involved.

About the Author

Dr Maria Hill is a professional historian and educational consultant and the first Greek-Australian to write about the Australian campaigns in Greece and Crete. She is a former award-winning high school teacher whose publication *Federation: Inclusion and Exclusion* for the NSW Department of Education and Training earned her a Commonwealth Centenary Medal in 2003. She was also the recipient of the State and National Discovering Democracy Award in 2001 and is the author with Ian Bickerton of *Contested Spaces: The Historiography of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (2003). Currently she is Visiting Fellow at UNSW @ ADFA: The Australian Defence Force Academy in Canberra.

Endorsement

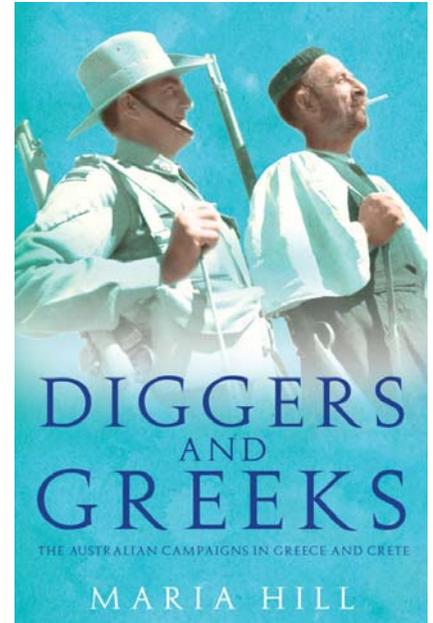
'Most studies of the Greek campaign have tended to gloss over the contribution of the Greeks. Maria Hill's book adds a completely new perspective to the campaign. She tells great stories of the interaction between Greek people and Australian soldiers.' – Professor David Horner, Official Historian and Professor of Australian Defence History, Australian National University

'In *Diggers and Greeks* Maria Hill considers existing accounts of the Greek and Crete campaigns alongside the Greek version of events. She offers a new understanding of those campaigns, to an extent where I doubt that existing interpretations can be viewed as the whole story any more.' – Dr Christopher Clarke, RAAF Historian and Head of the Office of Air Force History, Air Power Development Centre, Tuggeranong

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