



Some topics to consider while reading *On Dangerous Ground*:

- The Gallipoli campaign
- Mateship in the trenches
- Politics and military blunders
- The complexities of warfare
- Patriotism
- Unresolved grief

ON DANGEROUS GROUND

A Gallipoli Story

by Bruce Scates

In 1915 Lt. Roy Irwin goes missing at Gallipoli. The young woman who loves him and the men who fought beside him begin their search. In 1919, historian CEW Bean returns to Anzac with artist George Lambert and soldier Harry Vickers to solve the greatest mystery of the campaign.

Forward to 2015, and Dr Mark Troy's quest to preserve the peninsula from roadworks is sidetracked by political intervention and diplomatic intrigue. But a flirtation with a dynamic young woman from Army Intelligence uncovers long-forgotten documents protecting Gallipoli's graves.



About Bruce Scates

Bruce Scates is a prize-winning scholar and storyteller. He has written many books about the Great War – *On Dangerous Ground* is his first novel, or 'imagined-history'. He has led several historical tours of Gallipoli and often provides expert commentary on radio and television. He has served on the National Committee investigating mass graves at Fromelles and now presides over the History and Heritage Panel of the Anzac Centenary Advisory Board.

Discussion questions

- 1 The artist, George Lambert, questioned whether or not a person can truly recover the past and if there is a wrong way of remembering events. Is there a right or wrong way of remembering the turbulent events at Gallipoli?
- 2 As a nurse, Elsie had a practical view of war and didn't see anything noble about young men being shattered to pieces. Yet she was a romantic when it came to Roy and was optimistic in regards to his fate. Does this make her a more endearing character? Do you like the fact that she never married?
- 3 What was your impression of the Turkish major, Zeki Bey? Did his insights into the suffering of the Turkish troops change your viewpoint of the Gallipoli conflict? If so, how?
- 4 Charley believed that lyrical archaic language, reminiscent of the ancient Greeks and Troy, is often used to romanticise modern warfare, in particular with reference to Gallipoli. Can poetic language disguise the brutality of war? Or does this lyricism embody the nobility of the Aussie digger?
- 5 At the Nek, hundreds of Australian diggers were gunned down as they were ordered to leave their trenches. Their charge was supposed to distract the Turkish guns long enough for the New Zealanders to gain higher ground beyond Chunuk Bair ridge. Can such human sacrifice ever be justified?
- 6 Vanessa believed that too much money is wasted on the dead by building memorials to honour the fallen soldiers. Instead she felt it could be better spent helping people in disadvantaged countries to have access to fresh drinking water. Do you agree with Vanessa? Is government money better spent on the living?
- 7 Was the Australian government right or wrong in trying to quell rumours of mass graves at Gallipoli in order to save taxpayers the huge expense of exhuming the dead and providing new individual graves?
- 8 Discuss the book's conclusion. Could Mark Troy have done more to protect the graves or was he sensible to compromise with the government? How would Elsie have reacted if she'd known the final fate of Roy's remains?