

A HISTORICAL STUDY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT LESSONS FROM THE GALLIPOLI CAMPAIGN

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Abstract

Human resource development (HRD) is noted for largely over-looking the study of history despite the potential contribution for the application of historical research to further understanding and shape the identity for the field. In contrast, the management field has a much stronger tradition for historical research with the military often selected as the context for in-depth historical studies of management. This paper seeks to respond to the call for historical research in HRD with an analysis of the Gallipoli Campaign fought in Turkey during World War I to examine potential lessons for HRD. The findings include a brief overview of the Gallipoli Campaign followed by an analysis of the lessons that could be drawn for HRD. The identified themes focus on lessons for strategy, leadership, and training. The discussion and conclusion provides a summary of the findings and makes recommendations for future historical studies in HRD.

Keywords: Historical research, military, Gallipoli Campaign

Introduction

Human resource development (HRD) is noted for largely over-looking the study of history despite the potential contribution for the application of historical research to further understanding and shape the identity for the field (Callahan, 2010a). In contrast, the management field has a much stronger tradition for historical research with several specific journals dedicated to historic studies of organizations, labor movements, management philosophies, and business leaders.

A growing number of books are dedicated to the management lessons to be gained from examining famous military leaders including Napoleon (Manas, 2006), George Washington (Brookhiser, 2008), and Colin Powell (Hararl, 2002) as well as major conflicts including the U.S. Civil War (McCarthy, 2001), Vietnam War (Ellis, 2012), Falkland Islands War (Watson & Dunn, 1984), and the Gulf War (Pagonis & Cruikshank, 1992). Yet, HRD has few examples of historical studies related to military organizations and conflicts. This paper seeks to respond to the call for historical research in HRD with an analysis of the Gallipoli Campaign fought in Turkey during World War I to examine potential lessons for HRD.

My own interest in this topic stems from the opportunity to present a paper at a research conference in Turkey - a country I heard much about as a boy growing up in my native New Zealand. Like most New Zealanders of my generation I was raised with the stories and legends of the Australian and New Zealand soldiers who fought and died in the World War I campaign on the Gallipoli Peninsula, located about 350 KM (220 miles) from where we are at this conference site. In fact, among my school friends I was a little unusual in that I could not readily point to a relative or ancestor who served or died in Gallipoli. Yet, the names of key engagements and battles during the campaign, landmarks on the battlefield, famous soldiers, and military leadership were known to almost all through our education and even in the naming of city streets. In addition to our formal schooling, children of my generation in New

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Zealand had our knowledge and perceptions of perhaps the most famous military engagement for our nation shaped by movies, books, television interviews of the aging survivors, and most vividly, participation in the annual commemoration and remembrance day. Held every April 25th ANZAC (Australia and New Zealand Army Corps) Day is arguably the most important national occasion in Australia and New Zealand (Hall, 2002).

Slade (2003) noted that “there can be few, if any, other places and instances in the world where a battle site marks the birth of a nation, thousands of kilometers away from it, and finding work which represents an ostensible defeat” (p. 780). Within the context of my personal history and research interest this paper seeks to examine the Gallipoli Campaign of World War I to add to the historical literature of HRD with an exploration of potential lessons that could be applied to the management and development of human resources. The following sections of this paper provide a literature review for the study of history and especially the historical study of military organizations, war, and military leaders applied to human resource management and development. The purpose of the study and research method of historical analysis are described followed by a brief overview of the Gallipoli Campaign. The findings with identified themes for potential lessons to HRD are then presented. The discussion and conclusion provides a summary of the findings and makes recommendations for future historical studies in HRD.

1. Review of Literature

Stokes (2007) noted that although much management research had tended to ignore or downplay the influence, the military is an “omnipresent and pervasive aspect of human society” (p. 12) with significant impact on many aspects of organizational life. Others have traced the evolution of contemporary theory and practice for organizational structure and management as showing a strong military legacy. Hunt (1991) proposed that the military provided a rich setting for the study of human resource constructs to due to the size, scope, and variety of its personnel. More recent human resource management research has drawn attention to the potential for learning lessons applicable for all organizational types from examining the military (Loughlin & Arnold, 2007).

The military has been the setting for HRD and training research studies, especially those related to leadership development (Dvir, Eden, Avolio, & Shamir, 2002; Thomas, 2006). Danby (2007) described the philosophy and key elements of leadership training provided today in the British Army suggesting that business leaders could learn a great deal from a close examination of their initial training and on-going development programs. An in-depth study spanning more than seven years examined the results of a training program designed to mitigate the impact of stress on decision making (Cannon-Bowers & Salas, 1998). Yet, historical studies of the military with specific focus on HRD are largely absent from the literature. A notable exception being the work of Ruona (2001) in tracing the development of the Training Within Industry (TWI) program established in the United States during World War Two; often cited as a pivotal event in the history of HRD (Jacobs, 2002; Swanson & Holton, 2009). This study adds to the paucity of historical research in HRD to examine an often overlooked campaign in the First World War.

2. Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of this research study was to conduct a historical review of the Gallipoli Campaign of World War One from an HRD lens. The focus is from a New Zealand perspective as this reflects my cultural heritage and identify. This lead to the overarching

research question of: *What are the lessons for HRD from the historical study of the Gallipoli Campaign in World War One?*

3. Method

Callahan (2010b) recently provided details on the application of the historical method to HRD. Several papers have been published that outline key aspects of the traditions, philosophies, and methodologies for historical research in management (Parker, 1997). The historical method is an interpretative approach noted for its “ability to analyze particular episodes, or empirical cases, and to explain broad-gauged patterns of social, cultural, political, and economic, and intellectual activity” (Smith & Lux, 1993, p. 595). Rowlinson (2005) defined historical research in organizations as “a flowing, dynamic account of past events that involves an interpretation of the events in an attempt to recapture the nuances, personalities, and ideas that influenced these events” (p. 295).

Savitt (1980) described historical research and writing as being descriptive but, despite being criticized for data dredging, “historiography is no more subjective than many other social science methods” (Parker, 1997, p. 114). At the most basic level, historical analysis involves a three-step process: (1) investigation method for the discovery and identification of historical facts; (2) synthesis of findings with the creation of causal statements and the construction of an explanatory narrative; and (3) interpretation to address the implications of the narrative for the research question (Smith & Lux, 1993).

Callahan (2010a) provided a summary of key ideas from Munslow (1997) and noted that historical narratives can be seen as *reconstructing* the past by uncovering “facts” and reporting them; *constructing* the past by proposing meanings; and *deconstructing* the past by challenging existing understanding drawn from historical evidence. This study investigated a topic in which a substantial body of literature exists, mostly in the form of books that provide detailed historical accounts of various aspects of the Gallipoli Campaign. Therefore, without the discovery of new primary sources it may be difficult to engage in a study reconstructing history. Consequently this research focused on constructing history with an exploration of phenomena and key figures from the Gallipoli Campaign as they relate to HRD.

The first step in the data collection stage followed the three-step process as described by Smith and Lux (1993) to investigate and identify historical facts. In depth library research was conducted relying on a variety of books, articles, and published documents. The library stage included reading and detailed note taking from several books published shortly after the conflict which were borrowed from the archives and stacks section of two major U.S. University libraries. In addition, several more recent publications were reviewed. These more recent publications were thorough, well-researched, and heavily sourced historical texts. Many of the publications in the past 20 years relied in part on newly sourced primary documentation including several recently discovered first-hand accounts including letters and dairies written by soldiers who participated. Therefore, these new sources were absent from previous historical studies, confirming a unique aspect of historical research in that new data cannot be created, rather the researcher can only find data (Smith & Lux, 1993). A wealth of information was also reviewed from the Internet from various government, military, and library sites in Australia and New Zealand. It should be clearly acknowledged that the vast majority of sources were New Zealand, Australian, and British with very few from Turkey. This presents a limitation for this research.

An important step in historical research, as outlined by Savitt (1980), is for the researcher to define his or her own perceptual experiences of the problem. The aim of this activity is to understand “the nature and the amount of subjectivity held by the researcher which will have to be accounted for in the evaluation of the findings” (Savitt, p. 54). To complete this task a narrative of my perceptual experiences was written and a summary of this was presented in the first section of the introduction above. The narration of history can be arranged chronologically, topically, geographically, or in some combination of the three (Shafer, 1974). This study generally follows the chorological approach tracing the order of battle between April 25 and December 20, 1915.

4. Overview of the Gallipoli Campaign

On the 4th of August 1914 Great Britain declared war on Germany and through a series of decade old alliances much of globe was propelled into armed conflict. Within two weeks following the outbreak of World War I Winston Churchill, a member of the British War Cabinet as first Lord of the Admiralty (equivalent position to U.S. Secretary of the Navy) identified the Dardanelles Strait as potentially offering a key role in the development of a plan intended to bring a quick end to the war. After the Ottoman Empire joined the war Churchill’s planned naval operation failed to open the Dardanelles and the hoped for capture of Constantinople (now known as Istanbul). Churchill then proposed a land invasion military assault on the Gallipoli Peninsula to smash the Turkish defense and let the Navy pass unhindered through to Constantinople.

In London, the navy and army conducted their planning in isolation and secret (Strachan, 2003), not in combination while Hamilton, the commanding officer was not given a chance to take part in planning the offensive but ordered with just three weeks to organize an amphibious assault with no precedent in warfare. As Shadbolt (1988) described, the only operation that can compare occurred 30 years in the future with the D-Day landings in Normandy during World War II. Initially Hamilton was given 75,000 men, most from Britain and France as well as diverse parts of the British Empire including Canada and India with nearly half from Australia and New Zealand.

The following section is focused primarily on New Zealand participation in the battle and draws heavily on a description by the noted New Zealand historian Michael King (2003). The day after Great Britain's declaration of war the New Zealand government offered an Expeditionary Force. The country which had only been extensively settled for 80 years was enthusiastic about the outbreak of war (Slade, 2003) and keen to show their support as dutiful citizens of the British Empire (Stack, 2011). Volunteers were called for and men from throughout the country immediately went into intensive training at camps established in the four main centers of New Zealand. The training from local professional officers was under the supervision of a British officer appointed to command the New Zealand Army; Lieutenant General Sir Alexander Godley.

In mid-October 1914 the main body of troops sailed from New Zealand with the 8,454 troops representing one in eighteen New Zealand men aged between 18 and 40. The planned sailing to Britain was diverted to Egypt to help repel a Turkish attack on the Suez Canal. The New Zealand troops remained in Egypt for extensive training and during this period were linked with a combination of Australian Army brigades and divisions to form the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps, creating the now famous acronym ‘ANZAC’. By mid-April the

combined troops were sailing from Egypt to Turkey for an invasion of the Gallipoli Peninsular.

The landings at dawn on April 25, 1915 were meant to occur across a two mile (6 km) front of gradual slopping beaches but, instead they waded ashore from the rowed-landing craft some 1.8 miles (3kms) north at a beach called Ari Burnu (later and still known as ANZAC Cove). The first troops ashore were Australian followed by the New Zealanders who encountered almost sheer cliffs and the 19th division of the Turkish army commanded by Mustafa Kemal Bey, later known as Kemal Ataturk. The Turkish defense was stronger than anticipated and Travers (1994) argued this was partly due to British racial attitudes regarding Turkish inferiority. As successive waves of landings pumped more soldiers on small beachheads and into sheer hillsides directly under the heavily defended Turkish positions the casualties continued to rise at an alarming rate highlighting that the “provision for medical services was atrocious” (Travers, p. 411).

By nightfall one in five of the 3,000 New Zealanders landed on April 25th were casualties. Hamilton had been receiving battle reports throughout the landings and his staff concluded that best option was to retreat and abandon the ANZAC landing. General Hamilton issued his now infamous order to his commander of the ANZAC troops “You have got through the difficult business, now you have only to dig, dig, dig, until you are safe” (Travers, p. 412). An area just 1.6 square kilometers (400 acres) held some 20,000 men dug into trenches and tunnels.

On the steep ravines, hillsides, and rocky slopes the ANZACs held positions in what quickly became a prolonged stalemate of equally balanced forces dug in to trenches often just a few meters apart. King (2003) cited primary sources from letters soldiers wrote to their families in which the weeks went by with no essential change in positions while conditions deteriorated until they were as closed to hell as men could conceive. Several assaults were planned in an attempt to break the deadlock. In one during May, the New Zealand Brigade lost 800 men in what was simply described as an ‘ill-conceived attack’ (King, p. 299). Recently found letters and dairies from two men from my home town of Christchurch show the mounting frustration toward the British favored daylight attacks launched over flat fields often into the teeth of Turkish machine gun fire (O’Connor, 2006).

By December 1915 the Allied forces were no closer to achieving their military goal than when they landed April 25th. Hamilton requested massive reinforcements but a rising public frustration over the mishandling of the campaign was mounting pressure to end the stalemate, misery, and killing. The order to evacuate was given by the British War Office in mid-December which was carried out secretly and virtually without casualties. Most authors consider the withdrawal the only aspect of the campaign that was a success (Hart, 2011).

5. Findings

A review of the literature and interpretation of findings from the perspective of potential lessons for HRD identified three themes; outcomes, consequences, and lessons for nationalism; lessons for strategy and leadership; and lessons for training. Each of these themes is discussed in the following sections.

a. Outcomes, Consequences, and Lessons for Developing Nationalism

Over 400,000 British and 79,000 French troops were committed to the Gallipoli Campaign with half becoming casualties. By some estimates the Ottoman Empire suffered over 250,000 casualties with 86,692 killed (Hart, 2011). The numbers killed in the various Allied contingents during the 260 day campaign included 26,054 British, 8,000 French, 7,825 Australian, and 1,682 from India (Prior, 2009). The cost to New Zealand was 2,721 dead and 4,752 wounded out of a total of 8,450 men which resulted in a staggering 88% casualty rate (King, 2003; Stack, 2011). Many of the men wounded would later die from their injuries whereas; many of those who survived Gallipoli would later perish in the trench warfare among the bloody fields of France and Belgium. There is widespread agreement among military historians that the campaign had no significant effect on the outcome of the war (McGibbon, 2000).

Shortly after the conclusion of the campaign, but well before the end of the war, a series of official investigations, reports, and inquiries were launched to explore what went wrong. In addition, a series of books were authored by most of the major military and political leaders that sought to explain the overall defeat of the British military. Indeed as the noted British war correspondent Ashmead-Bartlett (1917) noted “almost every commentator on the World War (One) has endeavored to fix the definite responsibility of our failure at the Dardanelles on the shoulders of some particular individual, but up to the present no back has been found broad enough to bear the entire burden” (p. 11). Through his outspoken criticism of the conduct of the campaign, Ashmead-Bartlett was instrumental in bringing about the dismissal of the British commander-in-chief, Sir Ian Hamilton which in turn contributed to the collapse of the ruling government. Churchill was demoted from his political appointment as First Lord of the Admiralty; although retained in the Cabinet, he resigned at the end of 1915, departing for the Western Front where he commanded an infantry battalion seeking to restore his reputation.

Almost immediately the investigations into the failure of the campaign highlighted issues of strategy, leadership, and training. King (2003) summarized the prevailing and dominant collective New Zealand account that “the debacle of the campaign as a whole was the fault of planners and the strategists, not the frontline troops” (p.300). The performance of the Australian and New Zealand troops was universally praised leading to the creation of the celebrated legend of the ANZAC spirit. “No orders, no proper military ‘teamwork’, no instructions just absolute heroism” (Hardey 1915, quoted from Pugsley, 1984, p. 18). In New Zealand, the ANZAC spirit is pointed to in some quarters as forming an important component of New Zealand national identity.

b. Lessons for Strategy and Leadership

While many ANZAC soldiers, politicians, and most citizens of Australia and New Zealand placed blame for the failure of the campaign on the leadership of key individuals Travers (1994) suggested that “the failure of Gallipoli can be best understood not as a series of individual command mistakes but as a systems or structural failure” (p. 403). This would support the contention of Ahlstron et al., (2009) who noted that World War I contains numerous examples, if not archetypes of faulty decision-making systems used by leaders. Others have attributed failure to an overall inadequacy in leadership, and more specifically a lack of ethical leadership, overly tight structures and standard operating procedures, and attenuated learning systems (Persico, 2004). The specific focus for each historical study

appears to have no difficulty in finding enough evidence to support their research question for explain the failure outcome of Gallipoli. But, perhaps the true explanation may be found in the combination and interaction of all these factors.

Some have suggested that an adage from military history is that generals "fight the last war". Hamilton's famous order to "dig, dig, dig" on the night of April 25th was a strategy he had learned when the British were fighting in the Boer War in 1881. The application of the 'dig-in' strategy did not bring about the same desired outcomes when applied 38 years later leading to stalemate and an incomprehensible level of suffering and loss of human life. As Ahlstron et al., (2009) noted, the application of previous successful strategies in radically different environmental conditions and contexts may lead to failure with numerous examples available from World War I. For example, the Gallipoli Campaign was rife with examples of the devastating application of outdated warfare strategy from the 1800s mostly fought with opposing armies lined up and marching towards each other across flat fields. This tactic was applied to the rugged terrain of the Gallipoli Peninsular where the enemy possessed the latest technological advancement in the form of the machine gun.

French (2001) conducted a historiography exploring the development of the British army in the interwar period and noted that in 1914 there was a complete lack of a strategic operational doctrine, except a deeply held belief to take the offensive in almost all circumstances. "Senior officers expected that their forces would experience heavy losses, but hoped to win by combining mobility with high morale" (French, 2001, p. 494). This study showed that this non-doctrine was still very much in place for the Gallipoli Campaign and the warning signs of non-mobility trench warfare, heavy losses, and declining morale appear to have been ignored. The repeated trial and error of wave after wave of soldiers sacrificed lead to division on the battlefield and soul-searching for New Zealanders. The failure of leaders in Gallipoli to learn, abandon old outdated strategy and tactics, and embracing new methods matched to advancements in technology and/or environment still raises questions that historical research has not yet fully explained. This concept could be extended to HRD in that organizations should beware of immediately implement learning and organization development strategies known to have worked in the past for new challenges.

c. Lessons for Training

The role of training was also offered as a reason for failure. The influential English author (later Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom) Ashmead-Bartlett (1917) noted in his widely distributed book that the army was a "band of brothers, not half of them half-trained" (p. 244). A more accurate description would be that the vast majority of ANZAC troops were well trained although, this tended to be less than six months of raining since their enlistment (Stack, 2011). Unlike the core of the British Army, the vast majority of ANZAC troops were volunteers and not professional soldiers. However, one aspect of training was often mentioned as potentially negatively impacting morale; the prolonged, rigorous, and stern instruction from Lieutenant General Sir Alexander Godley, the British Officer in charge of designing and executing the training program for the New Zealand troops. While Godley's approach and methods for training was proven to be effective (McGibbon, 2000), it was his aloofness, tactlessness, and his practice of establishing his headquarters at Gallipoli on a ship offshore rather than in the trenches with his troops that undermined all respect of both unlisted men and officers. This rigid command and domineering leadership style applied to training and development which still dominated the British Army in 1915 was proposed as another key aspect of the systems and structures that contributed, in part, to the failure of

Gallipoli (Travers, 1994). A clear tone of imperial superiority over “colonials” and demonstrated preference in loyalty to British Army authorities rather than the New Zealand government left a lasting tarnish on the reputation of most of the non-ANZAC commanders in Gallipoli.

The common cause of ANZACs at Gallipoli cemented strong links between New Zealanders and Australians throughout the twentieth century (Kirby, 2002). Cultural characteristics formed on the Gallipoli battlefields included mutual respect, admiration, and mateship, along with good-natured joking, and intensive competition in sport friendship that largely remains to this day. Business leaders of large corporations in both countries have recently talked of the benefits of cooperation rather than competition by “keeping the ANZAC spirit alive” (Morris, 2007). The connection of mutual respect, admiration, and friendship also extended to Turkey. As Ziino, (2009) detailed, Gallipoli has a cultural, religious, and national meaning for Turkey.

Gallipoli may not be holy ground but it is certainly a place of pilgrimage for New Zealanders and Australians, although far less so for the British or French. Slade (2003) suggested that the thousands of Australians and New Zealander’s who visit Gallipoli each year “come to gain a slightly better understanding of who they are and where they come from” (p. 780). Hyde and Harman (2011) found young Australian and New Zealand tourists believed the visit to Gallipoli would lead to personal transformation. In this respect, Gallipoli may offer an additional connection to HRD as a site or place for learning supporting the recent argument advanced by Nissley (2011) for HRD to more fully explore the connection between learning and location.

Conclusions

The application of lessons from the military is a growing area of interest for the study of human resources in organizations (Loughlin & Arnold, 2007). Yet, the existing literature on historical military studies applied to HRD is dominated by leadership development texts that tend to focus on famous leaders who won major battles. These examples are used in HRD learning events in the form of metaphor, story, and training case studies that organizations have applied to show how to triumph over a challenging enemy in difficulty circumstances to reach victory. As advocated by Short (2000), the use of metaphor is useful for “exploring how the HRD field can be seen as other unrelated things offers the potential of transforming how we perceive HRD, which can in turn change our behavior” (p. 336).

However, World War One is largely absent of what Prior described as heroic tales. The notable exception is Gallipoli, although it represents a devastating and often senseless loss of life for no military victory. Perhaps, as a result, there is little evidence of the lessons of this conflict in general, and specifically, the Gallipoli Campaign utilized in organizational learning events. The Gallipoli Campaign, at least primarily from the New Zealand perspective which was adopted as the lens for focus in this study, maybe worthy of further consideration of the lessons for HRD from the historical study of this conflict.

Callahan (2010b) described that history is important to HRD and urged HRD researchers to consider historical studies to solve practical problems through theory and research. Recommendations for future historical research in HRD start with the observation that there are opportunities to use history to develop answers and create a new basis of understanding for problems in theory and practice. This requires studying the historical event with care and

in depth and not hastily or superficially (Lamond, 2006). Yet, most HRD scholars are not historians or as Callahan noted, are infrequently trained in historical methodologies. This does raise concerns and also might suggest opportunities for additional coursework in graduate HRD programs and for workshops at HRD conferences.

This study of HRD lessons from the Gallipoli Campaign highlighted potential new and diverse avenues for utilizing military history to inform HRD theory and scholarship. There are numerous examples of military case studies that have been applied to business, management, and human resource management but very few in HRD. Although, as Grey (2008) noted, military history provides something of a paradox as “at its best it deals with events that are often of the greatest and most immediate consequence to individuals, groups and indeed entire nations, yet it is barely taught in ...universities and, when it is, often goes to great lengths to avoid serious discussion of the central business of war, the management of organized violence” (p. 455). The application of military historical studies for HRD would also raise concern about perpetuating the dominate masculine rationality so eloquently critiqued by Bierema (2009).

The structure, strategy, and operation of many organizations is heavily influenced by a legacy and lessons learned from the military. A growing engagement is also reported in the organizational and management literature with military and militarization themes and issues (Stokes, 2007). To date, few studies in HRD have explored and critiqued how the military roots and influence may impact organizational learning. The management field is showing greater interest in military historical research in both popular business texts and in-depth rigorous studies. As Ahlstrom et al., (2009) accurately concluded, scholars “who want to learn from history and draw on it for their work must address it on its own terms and that both context and accurate detail matter” (p. 639). It is hoped that military history could inform HRD theory and practice with future historical studies examining a wider range of issues important to the HRD field.

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