The article on the pages below is reprinted by permission from *United Service* (the journal of the Royal United Services Institute of New South Wales), which seeks to inform the defence and security debate in Australia and to bring an Australian perspective to that debate internationally.

The Royal United Services Institute of New South Wales (RUSI NSW) has been promoting informed debate on defence and security issues since 1888. To receive quarterly copies of *United Service* and to obtain other significant benefits of RUSI NSW membership, please see our online Membership page: www.rusinsw.org.au/Membership
BOOK REVIEW

Diggers and Greeks: the Australian campaigns in Greece and Crete

by Maria Hill

University of New South Wales Press Ltd: Sydney; 2010; 479 pp.; ISBN 978-1-74223-014-6; RRP $59.95 (hardback); Ursula Davidson Library call no. 587 HILL 2010

Diggers and Greeks is an account of the delaying defence fought against the German invasion of Greece by British Commonwealth and Greek forces in April 1941 and their unsuccessful attempt to defend Crete the following month. It focuses primarily on the contribution by British Commonwealth and Greek forces in April and May, and the Greek Army's defence fought against the German invasion of Greece. Instead, he deployed third-grade Greek divisions on the flanks of allied divisions on the Aliakmon. It has been told following month. It focuses primarily on the contribution by British Commonwealth and Greek forces in April and May, and the Greek Army's defence fought against the German invasion of Greece. Instead, he deployed third-grade Greek divisions on the flanks of allied divisions on the Aliakmon.

Similarly, Greek foreign policy was based on an unrealistic expectation that Yugoslavia would fight any German invasion and hence prevent German passage into central northern Greece through the Monastir and Vevi Gaps. This assumed that a country that vacillated wildly and frequently from a pro-German to an anti-German stance, would be capable of uniting its people and deny German access to Greece. In the event, Yugoslavia adopted an 'open gate' defence when the Germans came and the main German invasion of Greece was on the Monastir-Vevi axis.

Hill presents her message in thematic chapters rather than chronologically. While this suits her primary purpose, it may confuse many readers and seems also to have confused Hill on occasion. Hill provides varying points of view on certain actions in different chapters, but does not relate the differing information or reach a conclusion as to what actually occurred. For example, she notes that the Dodecanese Regiment at Vevi, instead of thinning out over three days as ordered, disappeared overnight (p. 96). She later records that rumours spread by fifth columnists succeeded in panicking the 2/8th Australian Infantry Battalion at Vevi (p. 171). Was the 2/8th Australian Infantry Battalion at Vevi forced out because its right flank had been exposed by the premature withdrawal of the Dodecanese Regiment, or was it panicked by the rumours? Or was the 2/8th forced out by the superior firepower of the German Sturmgeschütz IIs assaulting up the ridge into its defended localities?

The main disappointment with the book, however, is the quality and accuracy of the information portrayed by the maps and diagrams. A reader of military history uses maps to see the dispositions of opposing forces and to understand the manoeuvres described in the text. A well-marked map is worth several pages of text.

The book, which is fully referenced, is well-written and is a good source of background information on the campaigns. It provides 'warts and all' description of individuals, units and politicians, which may cause resentment among some readers, as the reputations of some individuals and units have been tarnished by these revelations. For someone about to start a study of the campaigns, one of the other popular books should be read before Diggers and Greeks. At the strategic level the book is good, but at the operational and tactical levels it is very general. I hope that the planned revised edition of the book will correct the many annoying errors that mar this first edition.

John Hitchen