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Anzac Ceremonies: Prime Minister's Visit to Turkey:  
25 April

Richard Gozney mentioned in his letter of 27 March that we had commissioned historical briefs on the Gallipoli Campaign from the MOD and on the Allied cemeteries from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The latter contains a succinct history of the Campaign which probably meets the Prime Minister's needs at this stage, and I enclose a copy with this letter. We have substituted summary notes on the cemeteries and memorials to be visited by the Prime Minister for the considerably fuller account in the original, and added a reference to Ataturk's words of reconciliation on the Anzac Cove memorial.

Following discussions with Australian and New Zealand representatives, the Embassy in Ankara have suggested slight changes to the programme agreed by the reconnaissance party in March:

- that the head of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, General Sir Robert Ford, should formally greet (and subsequently see off) the Prime Minister and Mr Hawke at the Commission Cottage where they will hold their bilateral in the afternoon.
- that Commission craftsmen working at Gallipoli should be introduced to the two Prime Ministers before their bilateral.

The New Zealand Governor-General will accompany the Prime Minister and Mr Hawke to the Cottage, and will probably want to be present at these brief formalities, though he will leave for Eceabat before the bilateral.

We shall write again shortly after Easter with briefing for the bilaterals with the Prime Minister and President of Turkey, as well as for that with Mr Hawke.

*Yours ever*

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BRIEF FOR THE VISIT OF THE RT HON MARGARET THATCHER MP, BRITISH  
PRIME MINISTER, TO GALLIPOLI, APRIL 1990

THE COMMITMENT ON GALLIPOLI

1. Altogether 35,815 Commonwealth war dead are commemorated on the Gallipoli peninsula, where 32 sites contain 22,335 burials, including 13,430 unidentified by name. Those with no known grave, totalling 26,910, are commemorated on five memorials, including the Helles Memorial (20,765, mainly United Kingdom), the Lone Pine Memorial (4,223 Australia, 709 New Zealand) and the Chunuk Bair Memorial (852 New Zealand). The total Commonwealth dead commemorated on the peninsula are

United Kingdom	24,674
Australia	7,245
New Zealand	2,344
Undivided India	1,530
Canada	22

HISTORICAL NOTE

2. The campaign in the Dardanelles aimed to capture Istanbul and remove Turkey as a belligerent, gaining an ice-free access to Russia by sea and the opening of another front against Germany and Austria-Hungary. The failure of Allied naval operations in early 1915, concluding on 18 March in an unsuccessful attempt by battleships to force the Narrows, suggested that the strategic aims could only be achieved by the taking of the Gallipoli peninsula. The first landings took place on 25 April. By 5 June, and at heavy cost, the British and French armies on Cape Helles had penetrated to a depth of six kilometres; but the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, landing on the Anzac beaches overlooked by precipitous and well-defended terrain, were to advance inland for no more than one kilometre. Further British landings north of Anzac and at Suvla Bay on 6 August, with simultaneous offensives mounted from the Anzac and Helles sectors, almost succeeded in breaching the Turkish defensive lines and breaking out into open country beyond. The eventual failure of this, however, resulted in the two opposing armies becoming deadlocked in static trench warfare. The Allied withdrawal from the peninsula, from Anzac and Suvla on the night of 19-20 December and from Helles on the night of 8-9 January, was accomplished without the loss of a single life.

3. The Commission's cemeteries and memorials on the peninsula were designed by Sir John Burnet. Many are without conspicuous boundary walls, their perimeters protected mainly by stone-lined ditches, as if to emphasise that the whole area, with many thousands of burials still undiscovered and unmarked, is sacred ground. The grave markers are in the form of inscribed stone tablets set on concrete pedestals. The main feature of nearly every cemetery on the peninsula is a rear screen wall of ashlar masonry with a plain cross in relief cut into the stone.

## OTHER CEMETERIES AND MEMORIALS ON THE GALLIPOLI PENINSULA

4. The imposing Turkish memorial at Cape Helles, in the form of a tall arch with a massive horizontal slabbed head, commemorates the 87,000 Turkish dead of the Gallipoli campaign. There are no Turkish cemeteries on the peninsula, and soldiers were buried as they fell.
5. The French War Cemetery at Morto Bay, Cape Helles, contains 2240 graves. In addition the remains of more than 12,000 are contained within the ossuaries. Although most are French, it is believed that some may be of other nationalities, including Turkish. There is another French war cemetery in Gelibolu (Gallipoli) town.

## SECURITY OF TENURE

6. Security of tenure of the Commonwealth war cemeteries and graves on the peninsula is assured under the Treaty of Lausanne 1923, which also provides that the whole Anzac area (some 1,500 acres containing 17 of the Gallipoli cemeteries) is assured in a similar manner although in practice the Commission does not exercise control over the land outside the cemeteries, which is mainly managed by the Turkish Ministry of Forests.

## MAINTENANCE

7. Responsibility for maintenance of the Commonwealth cemeteries and memorials rests with the Director of the Commission's Outer Area, whose office is in Maidenhead. The day-to-day maintenance is carried out by locally engaged staff under the supervision of a United Kingdom based Local Supervisor, whose office is in Canakkale.

## CURRENT BUSINESS

8. Within the limit of the power available to them, the Turkish authorities have, over the years, exercised reasonably effective control over development on the peninsula with a view to preserving the former battlefield area and the surroundings of the cemeteries and memorials. In 1960 large areas of previously barren land surrounding many of the Commission's sites were planted with trees by the Turkish Forestry Authority and more recently certain undesirable housing developments have occurred. The Commission tries to keep the need for proper control on the agenda at all times in its discussions with the responsible Turkish officials.
9. Many of the cemeteries are at present being renovated during the course of a five year development programme due for completion in 1993-94. This involves further horticultural improvements and a programme of re-engraving in situ of many inscriptions on grave marker plaques which have become partly illegible due to weathering.

## CEMETERIES TO BE VISITED BY THE PRIME MINISTER

10. The Helles Memorial, where the British Ceremony will take place, commemorates the names of 20,765 Allied soldiers who are buried in the area with no known grave (18,987 British, 248 Australians and 1,530 from undivided India). The Cemetery at V Beach, which the Prime Minister will visit after the British Ceremony, contains the graves of 690 British soldiers. V Beach was the site of the landings involving the "River Clyde" which were heavily opposed by the Turkish Infantry.

11. Shrapnel Valley Cemetery, where the Prime Minister will meet the Australian Prime Minister and the New Zealand Governor-General, and lay a wreath on the grave of an Australian and New Zealand soldier, contains the graves of 683 Allied soldiers (British 28, Australian 527, New Zealand 56, unidentified 72). Shrapnel Valley obtained its name from the heavy shelling by the Turks during an attack on 26 April 1915.

## ANZAC COVE

12. The Prime Minister will not visit ANZAC Cove, but will drive slowly past it, and pause at the Turkish memorial. The latter is inscribed with Ataturk's words of reconciliation, written in 1934:

Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives

You are now lying in a friendly country; therefore rest in  
peace

There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets to  
us where they lie side by side here in this country of ours

You the mothers

who sent their sons from far away countries, wipe away your  
tears

Your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace .

After having lost their lives on this land they have become our  
sons as well

