

APPENDIX V

REPORTS ON GRAVES AT GALLIPOLI AND THE FUTURE OF ANZAC

First Report

The first report of the present writer after inspection of the Old Anzac cemeteries was sent on 17th February 1919, the day after inspection. It has been printed at the end of Chapter V except for the third, fourth, and fifth paragraphs, which ran:

"The following are details of my examination made in company with Hughes. No evidence exists at Anzac of any systematic desecration of graves. Four cemeteries, (1) Brown's Dip North, (2) Shrapnel Gully, (3) Beach, (4) Ari Burnu Point, have been interfered with. At Brown's Dip North six or seven graves unquestionably have been dug up and replaced recently by mounds wrongly sited. In the other cemeteries mentioned there is no evidence of any grave having been dug up though there are signs that two or three have been opened, probably by inhabitants of the Peninsula or soldiers searching for loot; there are also a few signs of interference by dogs.

"What is certain is that at some time early in 1916 Turkish authorities ordered these cemeteries to be put in order. Previously thereto all wooden crosses had disappeared—it is almost certain that they were taken by the local garrison for firewood. The Turkish officer detailed to rectify this made up numerous mounds bordered by stones, similar to the mounds in the Turkish cemeteries, on the site of the old cemeteries; but both (the boundaries of) the site and the direction of the rows are in every case wrong.

"Very careful examination by Hughes and Woolley, however, located with complete certainty the positions of every original grave. These lie beneath the later Turkish constructions. These have been checked with the plans and proved exactly accurate. Two or three inscriptions on stone, bronze or tin which are still

in position afforded final proof. An examination of one grave in each cemetery is now being made at my request in order to obtain a definite test as to whether the bodies in the original graves are undisturbed. I will later report the result. In the case of the Shell Green cemeteries, new fortifications dug on the edge of the hill appear deliberately to avoid them; four graves here were disturbed at some period. The remaining cemeteries of the Old Anzac position have, since the disappearance of the crosses, been apparently unrecognised and are untouched by the Turks. Although completely overgrown they can be recognised with certainty by the methods worked out by Hughes.

"Of the 8000 Australians killed during the campaign, about 2000 were buried at Egypt, Malta and Lemnos; 6400 are definitely recorded as having been killed at Gallipoli. Of these about 3500, recorded as having been buried with (sometimes) vague locations, will be identified with certainty; respecting the graves at Cape Helles I will report later. The remainder at Anzac number about 2500. Of these some can be located with certainty beside men of the same unit killed the same day, of others the graves are probable but not certain, and the remainder were killed in No-man's-land and either were buried during the armistice or lie there today recognisable as Australians by their kit."

Second Report

The final report, handed on 13th March 1919 to British G.H.Q. at Constantinople for cabling to the Department of Defence, Melbourne, and the High Commissioner for Australia, London, was as follows:

"In continuation of my previous report, during the past three weeks I thoroughly inspected the graves at Anzac and Helles, and completely confirmed the opinion that the graves had not been systematically desecrated. At some period after the Evacuation the graves were unprotected and local inhabitants and individual soldiers dug up a certain proportion, searching the pockets and money-belts of the dead. Some cemeteries were not discovered by the marauders and remained untouched until rediscovered by Hughes. In other cases Turkish and Australian

dead have been dug up indiscriminately. Turkish governmental control was always weak. If in future the Dardanelles is administered by Turkey, special care will be necessary to prevent a recurrence of depredations by the inhabitants who are now returning and salvaging the Anzac area for wood, tanks, etc.

"Anzac has now been almost completely searched by Lieutenant Hughes, about 4700 graves having been definitely located and surveyed while others are still being found. Within five weeks Hughes will have located and surveyed the exact position of nearly all graves of which reports exist, and will then proceed to Helles to help a British officer locate Australian graves there. Large temporary wooden crosses are now being inscribed for every located grave. Erecting the crosses, making up the mounds and fencing will then presumably be carried out by fatigue parties of British troops supervised by the Royal Engineers.

"It is therefore necessary that the Australian Government should as soon as possible express its wishes with reference to the rival policies, namely (1) that crosses should be erected over the men where they fell, or (2) that the remains should be collected in a few large existing cemeteries. The former policy can be perfectly well carried out if the whole of Anzac is vested in the Imperial Graves Commission but only if this is done. At Helles the case is different, because the Helles area is larger and more agricultural. There it clearly rests with the British Government whether to express a wish to retain the whole battlefield. The Australian advance (there) on May 8th covered about 1000 yards square. Possibly 200 Australians are buried all over the area, especially (1) just behind the 'Tommies' Trench, and (2) behind the support trench dug by the Australians after the advance. Hughes has not yet completed this area, but will certainly identify many graves near these points besides others in British cemeteries. At Helles, therefore, even if the British decide to concentrate the bodies into the main cemeteries, two small Australian cemeteries might be placed at the 'Tommies' Trench and the line reached by the Australians. If there is only one cemetery, the Australians should be transferred to a special portion.

"Throughout Anzac and Helles, similarly to all battlefields, numerous skulls and bones of both sides remain on the surface until work is completed. These sights would be unspeakably

distressing to soldiers' relations if they visited the place prematurely. This is one of many reasons why it is necessary to complete the work. In my opinion the British portion of the staff of the Graves Registration Union [sic]¹ here is not a quarter large enough to cope with the work in reasonable time. Suvla is completely untouched; the New Zealand representative is occupied in administering the British headquarters; the Australian representative, after locating the graves at Anzac, will probably be required to locate British graves at Suvla. In my opinion he should be charged solely with the completion of the Australian graves at Anzac and Helles including any British graves within purely Australian areas. For the British work at Suvla, Helles and Chunuk Bair the present staff should be quadrupled.

"Work is also perpetually hampered because it is attempted with soldiers in process of demobilisation; Europeans are not suited for summer work and also probably feel that they did not enlist for this duty.

"As regards salvage, several large relics at Anzac should certainly be removed, including two lifeboats and the barrel of our 4.7-inch gun which Hughes found near Koja Dere. If not removed they will become a Turkish war trophy. Also there are quantities of loophole plates, and smaller relics which would form a basis of exchange with foreign museums or could be sold for the benefit of the museum funds.

"With reference to the roads, Anzac is accessible by Ford car during fine spells even in winter, and (the journey) would easily be practicable in summer. Hughes estimates that the laying out of the cemeteries, and fencing them with salvaged material within three months, with Egyptian labour would cost £1000 in wages, sustenance and materials. The laying out of paths to eight principal points within Anzac would cost £200, and the annual upkeep by a working party each spring £110. The first cost or repair of motor roads from Boghali to North and South Anzac and around the Beach would be about £600 and the annual cost £200. Hughes bases the above on the cost of labour in Egypt and Palestine.

¹ I should have written "Directorate". "G.R.U." stood only for its Units, such as the one on Gallipoli.

“On the basis of the above facts, I recommend that, in order to meet Australian and New Zealand sentiment, the Peace Conference be asked to vest the Anzac area in the Graves Commission; if this is conceded, that all Anzac graves should be retained in their present positions, namely:

- (1) all cemeteries remain on their present sites, strongly fenced with salvaged material, the paths made up and the cemeteries planted with small Australian trees, not altering the appearance of the battleground;
- (2) outlying graves be made where still lie the remains of men who penetrated furthest on the first day;
- (3) miscellaneous remains in No-man’s-land be buried before each post and a monument erected containing the name of the post and the names of all men who have fallen there.
- (4) Australian graves at Helles should be treated in conformity with whatever principle is adopted by the British, namely, if the area is taken over they should be retained in situ; if several cemeteries are retained Australian cemeteries should be placed at Tommies’ Trench and the line reached by the Australians; if only one cemetery is made the Australians should be transferred to a special portion of it;
- (5) after the Australians and British are all buried the Turks should all be buried, but not until the burial of our men is completed, because if the Turks begin work before we are finished they are certain to confuse Australians with Turks;
- (6) visitors should be prohibited with the utmost rigour, whatever their pretext, until all remains are buried and the work entirely completed,
- (7) it is most urgent that this work be completed as soon as possible;
- (8) with this object all official and semi-official tourists should be strictly barred;
- (9) representations should be made that the British staff should be greatly increased in order to deal with Helles, Suvla and North Anzac in reasonable time;

- (10) Australian and New Zealand officers should be confined to work on the areas covered by Australian and New Zealand fighting including British graves only within those areas;
- (11) these officers should be made representatives of Australia and New Zealand on the Graves Registration Union² responsible to their respective governments for the eastern theatre. Now they are simply employees of the Graves Registration Union for use in any work the Union desires;
- (12) in order to finish the Australian graves as soon as possible, I urge that Hughes should be allotted a working party of, say, 100 Macedonian Labour Corps or Egyptian labourers;
- (13) after the Anzac graves and paths are completed, these should make the quickest and most comprehensive salvage of the whole area in order to remove national relics;
- (14) arrangement should be made with the future authority controlling the Peninsula for the repair, every spring-time, of the motor road to Anzac in accordance with Hughes' plans;
- (15) if, as is probable, Hughes resides in Egypt, it is desirable that he should be appointed, on appropriate conditions, Australian representative on the Eastern Section of the Imperial Graves Commission, with the duty of visiting once yearly all cemeteries in Palestine, Egypt and Gallipoli on behalf of the Australian Government."

² This should be Graves Registration Directorate (*see previous note*).