

# **Survey to Detect & Manage Exposed Human Bone in High Tourist Impact Areas of Anzac, Gallipoli Peninsula.**

**National Trust of Australia (ACT)**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This paper outlines a survey methodology to detect and manage exposed human bone visible on the surface in specific areas noted for high tourist visitation and impact in the Anzac area of the Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **The problem**

During visits to the Anzac area in 2003, 2005 and 2007 the National Trust (ACT) Heritage Office, Dr Peter Dowling, detected human remains in areas which are highly frequented by tourists. Dr Dowling is an archaeologist and biological anthropologist with experience in human skeletal anatomy and in particular with bone in archaeological contexts.

In 2003 an almost complete human femur (thigh bone) was found above Anzac Cove lying on the side of the ride directly opposite the Anzac Cove marker. This bone had most likely eroded to the surface from a site on the slope above the road and had fallen down the cliff face. An examination of the bone on site by Dr Dowling and an accompanying colleague showed that it belonged to a young male. There were no signs of osteological changes, arthritic wear or trauma on the bone other than that which could be attributed to weathering due to surface exposure.

Given the situation of this bone at Anzac Cove, it is highly likely that it is the remains of an Anzac soldier. Immediately after this bone was found the Commonwealth War Graves office in Canakkale was contacted and advised of its situation. This area overlooking Anzac Cove (5 metres from where the bone was found) is frequently visited everyday by tourists who, in most case, alight from vehicles to take photographs of the 1915 landing beach. In April 2005 during the road works along the beach road the cliff face above Anzac Cove was cut back to widen the road corridor. In doing so any further skeletal remains of this individual were most likely destroyed.

On subsequent visits in 2005 and 2007 Dr Dowling found other fragments of human bone exposed on the surface in areas of high tourist visitation. The latest find, 19 May 2007, was on the side of Ridge Road which runs from Lone Pine to the Nek in the former 'No-Man's-Land' between the Allied and Turkish trenches. Two human bone pieces, a cervical vertebra and a section of frontal bone from around the eye socket, were found lying on an embankment bordering the road (within 1.5 metres of the sealed road surface). There had been heavy rain during the previous night and these bones were most likely uncovered by fluvial erosion. The embankment, in the vicinity of Courtney's and Steel's Post, where the bones were found comprises the former parapet of a front-line trench on the Anzac side of the battle front. The bone pieces could be either that of an Allied or Turkish soldier. After discovery, both bone pieces were buried where they were found with as much dignity as could be attained.



Human vertebra found at Anzac 2007



Site of human bone on bank next to right foot of the left figure

The Ridge Road is the main access and transit route for vehicles along the second ridge and is heavily impacted by tourist visits. On any day, other than during the April 25 ceremonies, up to one hundred tourist coaches and many other private vehicles transit this road. During the 25 April ceremonies literally thousands of people visit this area on the day. Many coaches pull up on the road verges to view the exposed tunnel and trench systems visible either side of the road. Many other tourists walk along the road and/or walk through the remains of the Allied trench system.

The exposure of human bone throughout the Anzac area is not uncommon. In most cases, particularly where fragments and single pieces are concerned, nature is allowed to take its course with no other disturbances other than weathering processes. But in areas of high visitor impact, such as Anzac Cove and the Ridge Road, exposed bone runs the high risk of being crushed by the wheels of vehicles or worse by illegal collection and removal. The National Trust regards this as unacceptable.

In 2005, as a result of public concern in Australia over road works above Anzac Cove, the Australian Senate (Finance and Public Administration Committee) undertook an *Inquiry into matters relating to the Gallipoli Peninsula*. One finding of that committee relating to human skeletal remains was:

The Committee finds that the process for treating uncovered human remains at Gallipoli is unclear. It is unclear whether the CWGC [Commonwealth War Graves Commission] is to bury the bones in situ, or transfer them to another site. It is also unclear whether the Commission needs to be informed of small bone fragment findings, and whether small fragments may be taken to the Commission in person.

The Committee recommended that:

#### Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends clearer guidelines for the future management, recovery, reburial or storage of human remains at Gallipoli. The current arrangements are clearly not understood, and their effectiveness doubtful

Following the completion of the Inquiry the Australian Government commissioned a team from Australia and New Zealand to conduct a joint historical and archaeological survey of the Anzac area. The team was to work closely with Turkish colleagues. The survey was to provide a clear basis for balancing future development in the Anzac area and to provide for the preservation of key sites. Up to this time this little progress has been made with this project and the teams are yet to begin surveying the Anzac area.

Given the current and expanding threat to the preservation of human remains at Anzac and the inertia of the joint historical and archaeological survey project, the National Trust believes there is an urgent need for a separate initiative to preserve and protect exposed human remains in high tourist impact areas of Anzac.



## **SURVEY OUTLINE**

This survey initiative should be implemented as soon as possible and should be continuous.

This survey outline can be further refined during the course of on-site implementation as long as changes have no detrimental effect to the protection and conservation of unrecovered human bone in the Anzac area.

This survey outline should be incorporated into an overall conservation strategy for the Anzac area.

### **Aim**

To preserve and protect the unrecovered remains of Allied and Turkish soldiers exposed on the surface in areas of high impact tourist visitation of the Anzac area.

### **Objective**

To locate, record and recover human bone in high impact tourist areas.

### **Target areas**

Specific areas to be targeted are:

1. The road and road verges of Beach Road from the perimeter of the 1915 Anzac line (vicinity of Shell Green) above Brighton Beach to the point opposite the former Embarkation Pier/No 2 Outpost site.
2. The road and road verges of Ridge Road from the Lone Pine Memorial to the junction of Gun Ridge Road above Baby 700 memorial.
3. The road and road verges of Artillery Road from the junction with Beach Road to the junction with Ridge Road.

More precise limits of the two survey areas may be determined on-site but should include the above specified areas.

### **Method:**

- The surveys should be done on foot by trained/experienced persons skilled in human skeletal recognition. Skilled persons could be drawn from appropriate departments of the

Onsekiz Mart (18 March) University, Canakkale. Survey persons could include undergraduate and postgraduate students with appropriate supervision.

- The surveys should be non-intrusive and measures taken to facilitate the least ground disturbance possible.
- The surveys should be done on either side of the roadways, particularly the road verge areas. More precise limitations of the roadway surveys should be determined on-site, but should include all areas of exposed ground visible from the roadway. Survey limits may extend into areas beyond visibility where tourist activity is common such as the trench systems adjacent to Ridge Road north of Lone Pine.
- The surveys should be conducted on regular basis at least once every two weeks and immediately prior to significant events such as 25 April celebrations and Turkish holidays.
- Bone remains located on the surface should be:
  - Identified as human
  - Anatomically described
  - Photographed
  - Accurately located by GPS methods and site plan
- Identified human bone should be recovered for future reburial or suitably stored in a place near to the battlefields.