

Trail 5

The Defence

Tour sites that vividly tell the story of the Ottoman victory on Gallipoli – along with the Allies' heartbreaking evacuation



Taking the trail

Follow the coast road running north from Ari Burnu, passing Canterbury, No. 2 Outpost and New Zealand No. 2 Outpost cemeteries on the right of the road and then Embarkation Pier Cemetery on the left. After Embarkation Pier Cemetery the road heads inland and a drive of 2.3 kms, passing 7th Field Ambulance Cemetery on the right, brings you to a fork in the road, with the left hand turn heading to the Suvla sector and the right fork towards the village of Büyükanafarta. Just before the road forks, there is a dirt track signposted for Hill 60 Cemetery on the right. Follow this track for 600 metres till you reach the cemetery. Note that the track can be difficult to navigate after heavy rain.

Plan your time

Allow 2 – 3 hours to explore The Defence trail.

If you're short of time, you can simply visit the must-do stop on the trail – Hill 60. The audio guide to Hill 60 gives you the big-picture story of The Defence trail.

Where to go next?

After The Defence trail, you could take the Cape Helles trail. You'll need to get to Kilitbahir castle to do the full trail or Alçıtepe if you have less time.

Trail stops

1. **Hill 60** – *Must-do stop*
2. Anafarta
3. Bigalı Headquarters

Visit ngatapuware.govt.nz for more information on the trails.

Stop 1**Hill 60**

Every remaining Anzac was called on. They would make one last attempt to take high ground at Gallipoli

Must-do stop

This stop introduces 'The Defence' trail. If you're unable to do the whole trail, this stop gives you the big-picture story in one go.

**Getting there from Eceabat**

See directions on previous page.

Your stop

Stand on the seaward side of the cannon looking out over the Dardanelles Strait.

Story

You're standing in the cemetery at Hill 60 at the memorial plinth. If you look up to the high ground between the trees you can see the New Zealand monument on Chunuk Bair and the Turkish flag flying next to the statue of Mustafa Kemal, later Atatürk.

After the offensive of August 1915 there were no further attempts to seize the high ground from along Rhododendron Spur – there was a stalemate. The Hill 60 attack was mounted to seize this tiny pimple of land, which was a junction point between the British at Suvla Bay and the Anzacs around Anzac Cove. There were some British, Indian and Australian troops involved in the attack and a scratch force of exhausted New Zealanders. If you look at photos of them before the attack, you'll see men who were bearded, with faces shrunken – their eyes exhausted slits.

So we had this attack on Hill 60. I was a rake-in for that one. We all were. The left-overs. You just had to do what you were told and follow the leader. The men lined up for the attack were all fairly disgruntled and dejected.

–Bill East

Every man fit enough to carry a rifle had to take part. The attack would be launched on 21 August 1915.

"In the morning, General Godley came up and told us he wanted to take a Turkish trench out on the left that afternoon. We had to cross two gullies where it was safe to stop for a spell. Then we had to plough through a stretch of scrub, then open going in full view of the Turks."

–Edward Templar

The New Zealanders attacked from the ridge nearest to where you are standing. There was no artillery support, it was just infantry attacking with rifles and bayonets. The whistle blew and the men charged forward. That brush area to the north behind the cemetery was the Ottoman trench line. The New Zealanders captured the trenches in this area where you stand, and butted up against the Turks. There was only a row of sandbags between the two sides. It was bloody trench fighting – with grenade and rifle and bayonet – to the point of exhaustion.

"We had a roll call the next morning. Our one officer was killed plus the Sergeant Major, and there wasn't one with a stripe amongst us."

–Edward Templar

The New Zealanders managed to capture a chunk of the hill but General Hamilton, who was in charge of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force,



To prevent the Turks noticing the emptiness during the evacuation, fatigues were put on at various points with instructions to lounge about and smoke. Australian War Memorial G01288

told General Birdwood, who commanded the Anzacs, to have another go. This would coincide with the next major Suvla attack on 27 August 1915. Once again, whoever was fit enough had to attack. Trooper Bill East, of the Wellington Mounted Rifles, was on the start line waiting for the attack.

"When the word came, Major Bruiser Taylor was right in front of me as he jumped to his feet. He had a sword he wasn't supposed to have – because of swords drawing Turk fire. And he blew his whistle and pulled his sword out and shouted 'Charge'. The next thing he was flat on his face, shot through the head."

–Bill East

The death of Taylor typifies this battle for Hill 60. A tiny piece of land was taken but at tremendous cost, and this destroyed most of what was left of the New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade.

"I decided to go forward and all the rest were coming with me across an open piece of ground. We were just anyone's mutton."

–Bill East

One of the New Zealanders told me that 'the dead lay like stooks after the harvest.' If you've ever been in a wheat field, you'll know exactly what

he meant. The names of the dead are commemorated on the Memorial to the Missing and in the headstones to the Mounted Rifles, a handful really—27 gravestones and 180-odd names on the memorial.

Hill 60 was the final offensive effort by New Zealanders at Anzac. It was a pointless attack for a pointless piece of ground. It simply destroyed what was left of the New Zealand Mounted Rifles, and the top of the hill was never taken.

"I never cried, but it was the only time I felt like crying that day. Was Gallipoli worth it? Worth all that suffering?"

–Bill East

The New Zealanders were taken off Gallipoli in September to regroup on the Greek island of Lemnos. They received reinforcements from New Zealand but they were still at half strength. They then came back to garrison the Apex area, below the high ground of Chunuk Bair, until the December evacuation. At that time there were rumours, and it was obvious that something was taking place, but the men didn't want to believe that there was going to be an evacuation because it meant failure and leaving their mates who were buried here behind.

"We could not understand two things. One was withdrawing in front of an

enemy and the other was leaving our cobbles behind. You don't know how that hurt the blokes. Only those who were there would know. We belonged to one another."

–Joe Gasparich

Almost every diary talks about the fact that they were going, and leaving their mates. It was a brilliantly conducted evacuation, but no satisfaction for a battle lost.

"The trenches were solid with ice, and I could hear the sound of my boots echoing down the trench. Talk about empty. I was alone at last. Absolutely alone, for the first time in the war. Soon after that it was all over. We were off, still grieving for those we left behind."

–Joe Gasparich



*Two Turkish soldiers standing next to a Turkish gun in its emplacement on Hill 60.
Australian War Memorial A05254*

Turkish Story

The Anzacs named this place Hill 60 because it is 60 feet above sea level. The Turks know this area as Kaiajik Aghala, or sheepfold – which was named after a sheepfold that was here. A sheepfold is a sheep pen made of stones.

The skirmishes at Hill 60 lasted from 10 August 1915, until the end of that month. Twenty days of struggle went on here between the two sides, who both wanted to control the high ground.

Someone said that the Anzacs used nearly 4,000 hand grenades here. That's why the Turks called it Bomba Tepe, which means Bomb Hill, because so many explosives were thrown from one side to the other.

The Turks were able to hold Hill 60, but for a little hill, there was a lot of struggle and about 1,000 Turks died here. About the same number of Allied soldiers died. In total, about 2,000 died – all for this little piece of land. And the irony today is that very few people come here and visit.

Hill 60, which lasted until the end of August, was the last major Allied attack of the Gallipoli campaign. After the battle, Mustafa Kemal, later known as Atatürk, wrote to Ottoman headquarters. He believed that the

Allies would eventually evacuate Gallipoli, but the Turks didn't have the strength to mount further major counter attacks. In order to find out whether the Allies were increasing or decreasing troop numbers, Mustafa Kemal believed that the Turks should carry out probing attacks. By selecting one piece of trench and attacking it, they would find out whether it was strongly held or not. But the German commander of the Ottoman 5th Army, General von Sanders, did not agree. This benefited the Anzacs by ensuring they were not heavily attacked until they evacuated in December 1915.

Until the final moment of the December evacuation, the Turks didn't understand what was going on, though they got conflicting reports. When headquarters wanted confirmation that the Allies were evacuating, the soldiers on the ground couldn't say for sure.

The Allies laid booby traps and barbed wire to prevent a Turkish advance. It was too risky to walk on the battlefield so there was a delay before the Turks finally reached the Anzac lines on the 20 December and found out for certain that they had evacuated.

They say that on landing day God was on the Turkish side; on evacuation day God was on the Allies' side.

There are some anecdotes that suggest that the Turks knew the Allies were evacuating, but if they were to report it, they would be told by their German commanders to attack – and nobody wanted to die.

According to a German Colonel, Kannengiesser, the German officers organised a counterattack so as not to allow an easy Allied evacuation, but they couldn't make the Turks get out of the trenches. Apparently they were too tired and wondered what the point was in killing more people. It was better to let them go.

Even though the Turks successfully defended the land at Gallipoli, the Anzacs inflicted heavily losses on the Ottoman Army. This probably contributed to the defeats the Ottoman Army suffered in the Middle East and elsewhere later in the war.

Stop 2

Anafarta

Two Turkish commanders, killed during the fierce battle for Hill 60, are buried in this graveyard

**Getting there from Hill 60**

Return to the paved road and follow it as it curves to the right, heading east to the village of Büyükanafarta. After 3 kms, you will come to a heavily overgrown Turkish cemetery, located on the edge of the village, containing many graves and headstones dating from Ottoman times, including some from 1915 of Turkish soldiers who fell during the Gallipoli Campaign. After 100 metres you come to the graves and memorial for two Turkish regimental commanders at the left of the road.

Your stop

Stand and face the graves of the Turkish regimental commanders Halit Bey and Ziya Bey.

Story

You are standing in the village graveyard at Anafarta. Two Turkish regimental commanders, Halit Bey and Ziya Bey, who were both killed during the battle for Hill 60 in late August 1915 are buried here. Halit Bey was killed at Hill 60 and Ziya Bey in Ashmedere, which is a gully just behind Hill 60 – it was such a fierce fight that both regimental commanders got killed.

Another soldier buried here was nicknamed Sutlac Hussein by locals. Sutlac is a pudding, so he was ‘Hussein, lover of puddings’.

While Sutlac Hussein was taking part in the battles at Hill 60 he witnessed one of the regimental commanders being shot while trying to round up men to attack. Sutlac said that his comrades were unable to help pull the commander back into the trench. Whenever he moved, the Anzacs fired on him. Finally, moaning in no-man’s-land, he died. That night his body was recovered by his comrades and eventually he was buried here.

The older graveyard further along the road from here is a very old burial ground. It probably dates from well before the Turks came from Central Asia into this area during the 14th century. Before then, Romans, Byzantines, Hellenistic Greeks, people from the Balkans, and Hittites from Central Asia would have lived here.

This place is like a crossroads between the Balkans, the Middle East and Asia.

It looks like locals of this village of Anafarta were buried here many centuries ago. The big upright stones are called Balbal and have been here for many years. The use of these stones was part of a Balkan burial tradition, and they were used by Turks living in central Asia to mark graves.

Unlike other Balbal, these ones don’t have any Arabic inscriptions, but they may have just worn off. No proper excavation has been carried out by archaeologists here, because cemeteries are impossible to excavate as they are sacred ground.

Even the origins of the name of this village – Anafarta – are unknown. No one knows the name’s meaning and we don’t know when the village actually started. It’s a local name, but over time it has changed and the original meaning has been lost. But what we do know is that this cemetery and the village in which it is located are both many centuries old.

Stop 3

Bigalı

This typical Ottoman residence is where Mustafa Kemal, later known as Atatürk, made his headquarters during the Allied invasion.

**Getting there from Büyükanafarta**

Follow the paved road through Büyükanafarta, passing the Anafarta/ Suvla War Museum on your right and then passing through the village square. Continue on along the road after it leaves the village, taking the right hand turn when the road forks after 400 metres. Drive another four kms till you see the village of Bigalı on your left. Follow the road as it loops around the village to the east, taking the second paved road on your left to enter Bigalı. Drive 300 metres till you come to a small parking area to the side of the village square. Park and walk up the side road to the right leading to the square.

Take the narrow road at the left corner of the square past the village tea house on the right and walk 100 metres. On the right is an old village house, used by Mustafa Kemal during the campaign and which now serves as a museum.

Your stop

Enter the courtyard of the house.

Story

This is the house which Mustafa Kemal, used as his Ottoman headquarters. He actually shared the house with the man who was the administrative head of the village and his family. This was probably the most suitable house for headquarters in the village as it is a two-storeyed stone house.

There was enough room for military staff, an office for Mustafa Kemal, as well as for the family who lived here. Kemal would occasionally come here for a rest when the campaign fighting was not too fierce.

This is a typical Ottoman residence. It is a stone house with a garden, and was built to last for two or three hundred years. This house, now a museum, was renovated in the 1970s. There are some photographs inside that relate to the Gallipoli campaign. In the garden, are some photos and drawings showing the landing at Anzac Cove, and some of Atatürk's personal photos.

The garden is a typical Turkish garden with mulberry bushes, and pomegranate, plum and almond trees, and a well. There is a huge storage jar, which would usually be used for olive oil. This is a beautiful place for a busy and important officer of the Ottoman army to come to and have a rest. People in the village said that in 1915, though some stray shells hit this ground, it was not heavily bombarded.

The village of Bigalı is where the reserve division under Mustafa Kemal was based. It was deliberately located right in the middle of the peninsula so it was close to both Gaba Tepe and Cape Helles and the soldiers could be easily shipped north to the neck area at Bolyair. Bigalı is also very close to Khilia and Eceabat, which were the harbours from where troops would be shipped to the Asian side of Turkey in the event of battles occurring there.

Another Ottoman reserve regiment was located at Maltepe, which was the Anzacs' final objective. Another regiment was located on the road to Constantinople, now Istanbul – near the Dardanelles.

The men lived in tents. When the Allies flew a reconnaissance to see how many men were in reserve, they simply counted the tents then multiplied the number by nine, as there were nine soldiers to a tent. The number they came up with was 12,000 men.

Not much has changed in Bigalı since 1915. The stone houses here have been recently renovated but the very old minaret remains. Recently there was an earthquake registering 6.5 on the Richter scale, but the minaret was undamaged, unlike others. Maybe the stonemasons who built this strong minaret were more skilful than those who built the ones that fell down.



Commander Mustafa Kemal (Ataturk) is fourth from the left. He is standing with the officers and staff of his Anafarta group. Australian War Memorial P01141.001

General von Sanders, the German commander of the Ottoman 5th Army, had his headquarters on the slopes of a nearby hill. Von Sanders is often pictured in history books standing in an area covered by trees and camouflage, which would have been taken in this area.

A 15-inch shell fired from the Queen Elizabeth landed here but it didn't explode. It was taken to Constantinople, and put in the town square to show locals what the English ships were firing at us at Gallipoli.

According to locals, once when Kemal came to Bigalı, he called village goatherds and hunters to come and see him. They didn't understand why they were summoned, but Kemal's

objective was to learn more about the local terrain, which could help him with his military strategy. There were many animals, especially goats, in this area, and it was only covered with low scrub. Today it's a national park, so a lot of trees have grown.

Before 1915, the lifestyle in Bigalı was quiet. People only worked on their farms for three months, then there was nine months of no work.