

DID YOU KNOW THAT WITH THE HELP OF ITS FRIENDS, KKL-JNF...

THE ANZAC TRAIL

From the Be'eri Badlands to Be'er Sheva



- Planted more than 240 million trees
- Manages and maintains 400,000 dunams (40,000 hectares) of natural woodland
- Contributes to Israel's water economy by building reservoirs and dams to impound runoff, floodwaters and recycled water, providing 50 % of the country's water used for agriculture
- Rehabilitates and restores polluted water ways
- Built 1,000 recreation areas throughout the country, including rest areas and regional parks that host tens of thousands of visitors
- Develops thousands of kilometres of cycling trails, crisscrossing the country's length and breadth through forests and open areas, for the public and for free
- Creates a bond between people and forests by organizing recreation and cultural activities in nature for all
- Conserves the environment, rolls back the desert and creates green and shade at southern communities
- Carries out cutting-edge research whose findings are applied to water conservation, sustainable forestry, the prevention of soil erosion, modern agriculture and related environmental issues
- Partners with international organizations in sharing knowledge and implements projects in cooperation with countries around the world to help find solutions to environmental challenges
- Reclaimed land for approximately 1,000 communities throughout Israel
- Reclaimed some 1 million dunams (100,000 hectares) of land for agriculture
- Purchased some 2.6 million dunams (260,000 hectares) for communities
- Forged 7,000 km. of roads and forest routes
- Educates hundreds of thousands of young people in Israel and abroad, intensifying their bond with Israel and helping the social integration of new olim into Israeli society through various programs.



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NEGEV



קרן קימת לישראל
 K K L - J N F

**TZEL
HANOF**

THE ANZAC TRAIL



20 April 1917, Gaza area. Horsemen from the Second Regiment and their horses take a break. Australian War Memorial Archives

BACKGROUND

During World War I, the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire was allied with Germany and Austro-Hungary. In January 1915, a force of 20,000 Turkish troops set out from the Negev and crossed the Sinai Desert in an attempt to attack the Suez Canal, which was under British control. The attack was a failure.

Major-General John Maxwell, commander of the British forces in the Egyptian theatre, had however learnt a valuable lesson. To protect the Suez Canal from another attack, in March 1915 he ordered the British positions redeployed to the Sinai, on the eastern side of the canal.

Several months passed, and for the remainder of 1915 the Great War was focused on other fronts. In December 1915 however, having failed to wrest Gallipoli from the Turks, the British evacuated their forces to Egypt. As a result, thousands of Turkish troops were freed for a renewed offensive in the Sinai.

In April 1916 the Turks, aided by German officers, launched another offensive towards the Suez Canal. In the decisive battle at Romani (August 1916), the Turks suffered a crushing defeat.

In the wake of this battle, the British decided to take a more offensive stance and prevent the Turks from any future access to the canal. The mission was assigned to a special force, the Desert Column, in which the Australian and New Zealand Mounted Division played an important role. These mounted troops were referred to as ANZAC, an acronym for the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.

THE ANZAC LIGHT HORSEMEN AND THE 'GREAT OUTFLANK'

At the beginning of 1917 the British forces launched an offensive to take the city of Gaza. The Turkish forces, however, defended the city valiantly. In two attacks on Gaza, on 26 March and 19 April 1917, the British forces were repelled.

General Edmund Allenby, who had replaced Lieutenant-General Murray after the failure of the Second Battle of Gaza, decided to breach the Turkish front in Beersheba. For six months the British forces prepared for the attack in secret. When the preparations were in place, Allenby assigned the ANZAC mounted troops the mission of taking the city.

Some 11,000 ANZAC fighters rode over four nights from the Gaza district towards Beersheba, taking a wide outflanking pass around Beersheba far from the eyes of the Turkish forces so that on 31 October 1917 they were in a position to surprise the Turks from the east.



Horses quench their thirst at the foot of Tel Gamma after Second Battle of Gaza. Australian War Memorial Archives

To attack from this direction, the troops first had to overcome the Turks' commanding position at Tel el-Saba. The Turks dug in, and the battle continued for most of the day. It was only as dusk was approaching that the order to charge on the city of Beersheba was given. Eight hundred Australian mounted infantry stormed into the city and captured it.

THE ANZAC TRAIL (IN PROGRESS)

The ANZAC Trail, some 100 kilometres long, retraces and commemorates the route the ANZAC horsemen took when they conquered Beersheba. Visitors are invited to follow the route, taking in sites of interest along the way. This brochure describes the various sites along the recommended car route.



Rafah sand dunes, February 1917.
A caravan of camels brings supplies to
the 3rd Light Horse Brigade
Australian War Memorial Archives

The Badlands Lookout at Be'eri

To get there: Turn from Route 232 towards Kibbutz Be'eri. Drive for another 50 metres and turn north (right). Proceed for another 900 metres along the dirt road as far as the lookout.

The Badlands Lookout overlooks a valley resembling a crater. Its surrounding slopes rise some 15 metres above the base of the crater. The valley and its slopes are made of soft, loose soil and are heavily fissured, creating a 'moonscape'.

The ANZAC fighters knew this area as Sheikh Abbas, after a sheikh's grave located about a kilometre east of the lookout. Sheikh Abbas acted as a British forward position facing Gaza. From the lookout, one can clearly see the Ali al-Muntar ridge where the Turkish forces defending Gaza were stationed. During World War I, Gaza City was at the western foot of this ridge; today, the city's buildings cover the entire ridge.

Construction of facilities at the Badlands Lookout is in the advanced stages of planning.

The ANZAC Memorial

To get there: Drive towards Kibbutz Be'eri; before reaching the entrance to the kibbutz, turn right along the paved road, following the perimeter fence of Kibbutz Be'eri.

Some 800 metres west of the end of the kibbutz fence, you will arrive at a junction. Turn right, coming to the original site of Be'eri and the Nahabir rest area after 1.6 kilometres. Continue for another 600 metres as far as a T-junction. Turn right, and drive along the Mandate-era concrete road for another 2.2 kilometres as far as the ANZAC Memorial on the left.

The ANZAC Memorial commemorates the ANZAC soldiers who fell in

battle in the Land of Israel. The monument was designed in the shape of the letter A, the first letter in ANZAC, and viewed from a distance it resembles the silhouette of the front of a horse. The cornerstone for the monument, which was erected with a contribution from JNF-Australia, was laid in April 1967 to mark the 50th anniversary of the battles. The tower overlooks what were once the Gaza battlefields.

The ANZAC Memorial is located in the heart of Be'eri Forest. The JNF purchased the land in the area during the 1930s. On 6 July 1946, the first residents of Kibbutz Be'eri settled in the spot where the Nahabir rest area is now located, at the same time as the establishment of ten other Jewish communities on other JNF-owned land in the Negev.

The JNF maintains the forest and has marked hiking and biking trails through it. The trails pass several fascinating sites, including the remains of British bunkers dug during World War II, and abandoned sulphur mines. The Nahabir rest area, which is accessible to the disabled, is located near the old kibbutz's security headquarters, water tower, and military positions from the War of Independence in 1948. During the month of February, the forest grounds are carpeted with beautiful red anemones that attract many visitors.



The ANZAC Memorial



Tel Gamma (Tel el-Jemmi)

To get there: Tel Gamma is located near Kibbutz Re'im, some 300 metres north of Route 232, between kilometre markers 35-36.

Tel Gamma rises above the western bank of the Besor Stream. The hill was a British army position. British lookouts and signalling teams were stationed on top of the hill, which overlooks the plains surrounding Gaza City, and sent messages to the troops in the field. At the foot of the hill the British built a reservoir and a field hospital where the wounded from the Second Battle of Gaza were treated.

Tel Gamma was inhabited during the Chalcolithic period (4th millennium BCE), and archaeologists have located the large Canaanite city of Yarza in this area. The city benefited from the fertile plains around it and from its location on an important trade route running along the Besor Stream en route to the port of Gaza.

An ANZAC sign stands on the southern slopes of the hill.

Nahal Assaf Lookout

To get there: From Tel Gamma, proceed south on Route 232. After 500 metres is Gamma Junction (where the road meets Route 242). Continue on Route 232 for 30 metres past the junction and turn right onto a dirt track. The track makes an immediate left turn, and continues parallel to the road for about half a kilometre, until it reaches the lookout parking area.

A large rest area and lookout plaza, built with contributions from JNF supporters in Australia and New Zealand welcomes visitors to the Nahal Assaf Lookout. En route to the lookout point, you will pass columns commemorating the dates of the Gaza battles and the date Beersheba was conquered. The parking area and the lookout point are accessible to the disabled.

At Nahal Assaf the JNF has planted a desert forest covering 850 acres.

Most of the trees planted are eucalyptus trees, while other broad-leaved trees and conifers make up the rest. The JNF

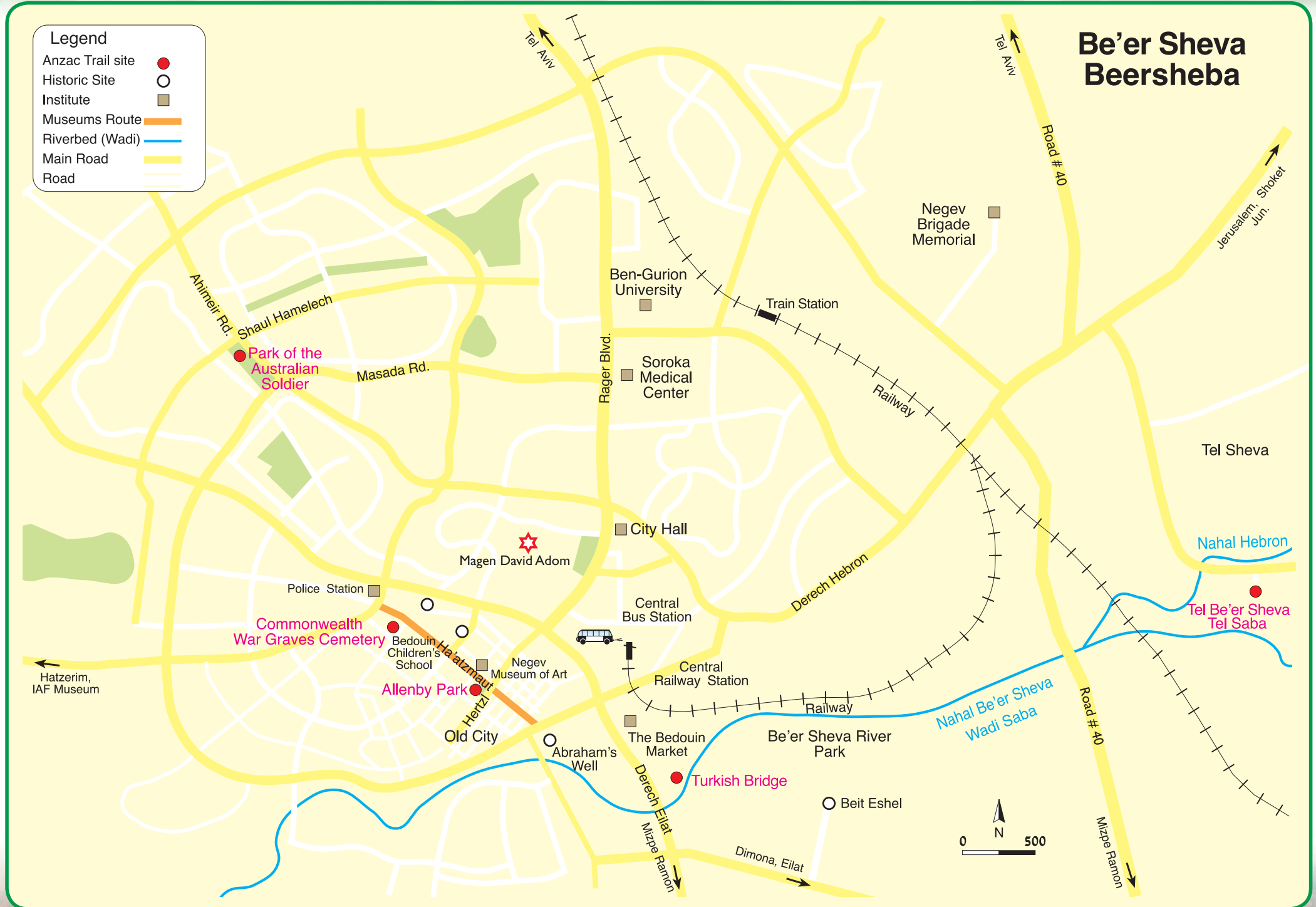
Tel Gamma rises above the Besor streambed

The Nahal Assaf Lookout Point



Be'er Sheva Beersheba

- Legend**
- Anzac Trail site ●
 - Historic Site ○
 - Institute ■
 - Museums Route —
 - Riverbed (Wadi) —
 - Main Road —
 - Road —



has turned the streambed into a 'field laboratory' to demonstrate different methods of preventing erosion. Several soil-stabilising devices have been installed along the streambed as part of the development of technologies to fight desertification.

Nahal Assaf commemorates Assaf Shachnai, the commander of a Palmah squad that defended the Negev communities during the pre-state period. He was killed in December 1947 along with five of his men near Kafr Shu'ut, close to Gevulot Junction.

Besor Park (Eshkol National Park) Shellal

To get there: Route 241, near kilometre marker 6.

Besor Park is a National Park operated jointly by the JNF, the Israel Nature and Parks Authority, Eshkol Regional Council and Mekorot national water company. The park covers 875 acres on the eastern bank of the Besor streambed. In the centre of the park, which boasts large grassy areas and thousands of palm trees, you will find the Besor springs, whose water fills picturesque shallow pools as it trickles down to the Besor streambed.

Around the abundant springs the British Army built its main forward water base for the forces on the Gaza-Beersheba front. It also built a dam on the Besor stream to create a reservoir for more than two million litres of water with the help of JNF Australia.

The ANZAC mounted forces knew the area as Shellal (the Besor ravine was known in Arabic as Wadi Shellal). At Khirbet Shellal, the small hill east of the springs, the troops discovered the remains of a Byzantine church floor with a spectacular mosaic. The mosaic was transferred to Australia where it is displayed at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

The British Army laid a railroad track in the Sinai, constructing it together with the advance of its troops, which reached as far as the Shellal (Besor) springs. After World War I, a railroad bridge for the Rafah-Beersheba line was built near the springs. In Besor Park one can see a restoration of part of the bridge and a replica of a goods wagon from the period.

An entrance hall containing a replica of the original mosaic as part of the ANZAC Trail is in the planning stages.

The Besor Route

To get there: The Besor Route starts from Route 241, about one kilometre west of the entrance to Besor Park. The southern end of the

A British water reservoir at the Besor springs. Australian War Memorial Archives



the Besor springs

route links up with Route 222 near Kibbutz Tze'elim.

The Besor Route runs some 18 kilometres along the western bank of the ravine. The track is suitable for cars but should be driven along carefully. The route was built by the JNF in conjunction with the Israel Nature and Parks Authority, and Eshkol Regional Council.

Along the route and within the ravine, one can see sections of the light railway line that led from the Besor springs to the British field units stationed along the Besor streambed. The route passes through Tel el-Fara (Sheruhen), which is adjacent to the west bank of the Besor stream. A sign on the hilltop describes the life of the ANZAC horsemen stationed around the hill.

Another site worth visiting is the Reservoir Lookout, located near the new Besor reservoirs built by the JNF together with Mekorot with a donation from JNF Australia. The reservoirs, which hold 7 million cubic metres, collect the flood waters that flow through the Besor ravine and also utilise purified wastewater from the Dan Region. The water from these reservoirs irrigates some 2,500 acres of orchards.

At the foot of the reservoirs is a sign describing how water was supplied to the ANZAC forces serving in the area.

Golda Park (Bir Asluj)

To get there: The entrance to Golda Park is from Route 222, between Mashabim Junction and Kibbutz Revivim, two kilometres from Mashabim Junction.

Golda Park covers both sides of the Revivim streambed and was formerly a gravel quarry. After the closure of the quarry, the JNF rehabilitated the landscape and developed the area as a leisure spot with large lawns, picnic areas, a lookout point and hiking trails. A children's playground has been established with the help of the National Council of Jewish Women of Australia. Floodwaters and the waters of a saltwater well are collected here to create a beautiful lake.

The ANZAC horsemen knew this area as Bir Asluj. The water-rich wells in the area made the spot strategically valuable. At the end of the 19th century the Ottoman regime erected a service centre here for the Bedouin of the area. Bir Asluj was also alongside the railway route built by the Turks to the Sinai Peninsula in their efforts to reach the Suez Canal. The railway reached Kuseima in the eastern Sinai but



Golda Park

its construction was stopped in the summer of 1916 after the Turkish defeat at Romani.

Near Mashabim Junction the ruins of a large Turkish railway bridge can be seen arching across the Revivim streambed. The ANZAC Mounted Division blew the bridge up on 23 May 1917.

Bir Asluj was one of the way-stations for the ANZAC horsemen during the Great Outflank. Although the Turkish forces had destroyed the wells when they withdrew from the area before the attack on Beersheba, they were rebuilt by ANZAC engineers. Several of the mounted regiments camped at Bir Asluj the day before the attack on Beersheba. It was from here that they marched through the night, arriving at dawn on 31 October 1917 at the positions from which they launched the assault on the city.

Plans to use the British well house in Golda Park as an information centre on the ANZAC Trail are in the advanced stages.

SITES IN BE'ER SHEVA (BEERSHEBA)

During the Ottoman period, the Beersheba area was known for its many wells and as an important meeting place for the Negev Bedouin. At the beginning of the 20th century the Ottoman regime wanted to strengthen its control in the Negev and it built a well-planned city here. Modern Beersheba was inaugurated in 1907.

During World War I, Beersheba became an important military base and logistical centre, as the desert city had 17 abundant wells. The Turkish forces defending the city numbered around 4,300 soldiers and 1,000 mounted troops.

Four sites in the city and its environs are included in the ANZAC Trail.

Tel Be'er Sheva (Tel el-Saba)

Tel Be'er Sheva is a National Park with remains dating from biblical Beersheba. UNESCO has declared the hill a World Heritage Site. The hill, which lies 5 kilometres east of the Turkish Beersheba, rises 20 metres above its surroundings.

The strong position the Turks established here was a key obstacle to the conquest of the city, and the ANZAC troops had to conquer it before storming the city itself. The Turkish soldiers fought valiantly, and it was only at around 3 pm that the fighters of the New Zealand Brigade, primarily the Auckland regiment,

succeeded in capturing the hill in a hand-to-hand battle.

Lieutenant-General Harry Chauvel, the Desert Mounted Corps commander, found himself facing a dilemma. Daylight was fading and there was not sufficient time to properly regroup for a charge on Beersheba. An unsuccessful attack would mean retreating all the way to Bir Asluj.

Putting off the attack until morning would mean eliminating the element of surprise, also giving the Turks time to destroy the city's wells. Chauvel decided to attack, and assigned the mission to the Australian 4th Light Horse Brigade.

The Be'er Sheva Stream Park and the Turkish Bridge

The area between Tel Be'er Sheva and the Turkish city of Beersheba is now a large park that runs along the Be'er Sheva streambed for some eight kilometres. The park was built with the help of JNF supporters from all over the world, in cooperation with the Shikma-Besor Drainage Authority, Be'er Sheva Municipality and the Environmental Protection Ministry. In the heart of the park you will find the restored structures of the Beit Eshel Lookout.

About a kilometre west of Beit Eshel are the impressive remains of the Turkish railroad bridge that spanned the Be'er Sheva streambed.

At 4:30 pm on 31 October, the 4th Australian Light Horse Brigade, commanded by Brigadier-General William Grant, cantered towards the Turkish positions, which were near Beit Eshel (now in the heart of the Be'er Sheva Stream Park). The Turks expected that, as usual, the Australian horsemen would advance until reaching the range of the defenders' rifles, and then dismount and charge on foot.

But there was a surprise awaiting them. At the signal, the Australians galloped directly into the Turkish defensive lines and overran them with lightning speed. The 4th and 12th Regiments exploited the breach and its horsemen galloped directly into the centre of the city to capture the wells.

Beersheba had been taken with the water wells still intact.

Allenby Park

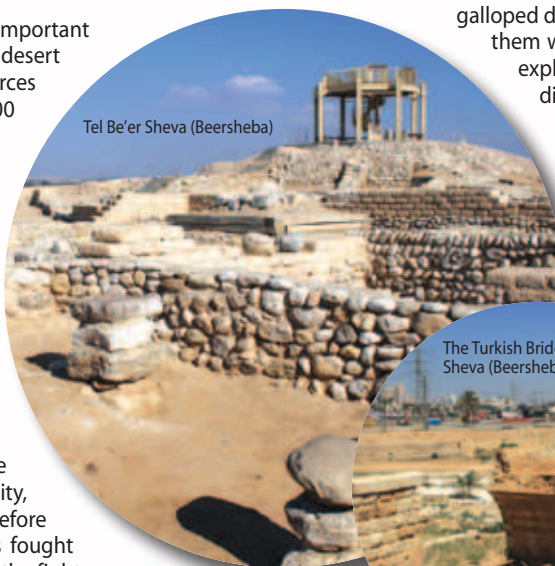
To get there: Located at the corner of Herzl and Ha'atzmaut Streets, in the heart of the Old City.

Allenby Park was planted in 1902 and was one of the country's first public gardens. It was located near the Turkish Government House (the Saraya building) and was used for public assemblies.

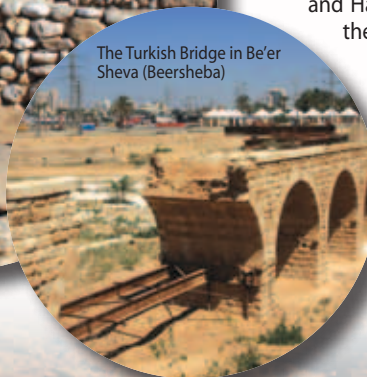
Be'er Sheva (Beersheba), the Turkish Governor's House



Tel Be'er Sheva (Beersheba)



The Turkish Bridge in Be'er Sheva (Beersheba)



In 1915, at the order of the Turkish Army commander Djemal Pasha, the park was refurbished. The gardeners, most of them graduates of the Mikveh Yisrael Agricultural School, created a symmetrical garden with four entrances from which four paths led to the centre of the park where a marble pillar bore a commemorative inscription.

After the British conquest, a statue of General Edmund Allenby was placed on the pillar. The park has undergone numerous modifications, and the Be'er Sheva Municipality plans to restore it with the help of the JNF.

The Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery

To get there: Located in Ha'atzmaut Street, at the corner of Hertzfeld Street.

The Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery was established after the conquest of Beersheba in 1917. There are 1,239 soldiers buried here, among them members of the ANZAC Corps that fell in battle in the region stretching from the Besor stream to Be'er Sheva and north to Yavne. The ANZAC fallen buried in Be'er Sheva include 174 Australians and 31 New Zealanders.

The Park of the Australian Soldier

To get there: Located on Ahimeir Street, between Masada and Shaul Hamelech Streets

The Park of the Australian Soldier is a memorial park and public playground, with special facilities and equipment for children with various types of disabilities. The park aims to promote the integration of special-needs children into the community.

The Park of the Australian Soldier commemorates the ANZAC Mounted Division that captured Beersheba. In the centre of the park is the impressive bronze statue of an Australian Light Horseman designed by Peter Corlett. A memorial ceremony for those who fell in the Battle of Beersheba is held near the monument on 31 October every year, with representatives from Australia, New Zealand, Britain, Turkey and Israel participating.

The Park of the Australian Soldier was built with a donation from the Pratt Foundation, in conjunction with the Be'er Sheva Foundation, Be'er Sheva Municipality and Keren Hayesod.

1917. Djemal Pasha Park, today Allenby Park (Goel Drori archive, Be'er Sheva)

Park of the Australian Soldier

The ANZAC Trail is a project in progress

The ANZAC Trail is a sightseeing trail that traces the history of the Australian and New Zealand Mounted Division in the western Negev during World War I. The ANZAC horseman accomplished a tremendous outflanking manoeuvre that led to their making a mounted charge into Beersheba and capturing it from its Turkish defenders. The conquest of Beersheba was a proud chapter in the annals of Australia and New Zealand.

The Society for the Heritage of World War I in Israel initiated the marking of the route and its preparation as a sign-posted hiking trail, and is overseeing the professional aspects of its development. JNF supporters in Australia and New Zealand funded the ANZAC Trail as a commemorative and educational project, with the Jewish National Fund in Israel bringing the initiative to fruition.

The ANZAC Trail is a depiction of desert ecology and the human endeavour to exist in this environment. Most importantly, the ANZAC Trail does historic justice to the events of World War 1 in the Negev and is an important addition to Israel's tourist trails.

Dear Visitors:

1. Please remember that safety comes first, and that your use of the park and its facilities is at your own risk and responsibility.
2. Adapt your conduct and equipment to the terrain and weather conditions, accordingly.
3. Follow the routes and trails marked by KKL-JNF or the Israel National Trail. Drive only on roads marked for vehicles.
4. Do not enter or get too close to water holes, caves etc. Do not stand on the edge of cliffs. Do not slide down or climb cliffs.
5. Do not drink the water at the site. Do not go into the water.
6. Fires are extremely hazardous. Light fires only where allowed and make sure to extinguish them completely.
7. Please keep the area clean. Dispose of your garbage in designated facilities only or take it with you.
8. Do not mark routes or erect any structures in the forest.
9. The forest and its facilities are for your enjoyment. So, please protect the flora, fauna and minerals.

For details and to join KKL-JNF's Friends Club,
BeShvil HaYarok - The Green Way
For forest events and tours - The Forest Line



1-800-350-550

For e-Green - to receive hiking routes by email -
www.eyarok.org.il

KKL-JNF online:
www.kkl.org.il

Plant to reduce global warming
Drop in at KKL-JNF's online planting site:
http://www.org.il/virtual_planting

