ANZAC Day Dawn Commemorative Service 2013 Kranji War Memorial Cemetery, Singapore Address by New Zealand High Commissioner, Bernadette Cavanagh

We gather here at dawn to mark a day of special significance for Australians and New Zealanders. To members of our community, we thank you for joining us once again. We are also honoured by the presence of a significant number of representatives from other countries.

Tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.

Greetings to you all.

On 25 April 1915, Australian and New Zealand forces landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula, at a place now known as ANZAC Cove.

After nine months of intense fighting, the failed campaign came to an end.

There was little to show for it other than the dead and the wounded. More than 21,000 British, 10,000 French, and 1,300 Indian soldiers died, as did colleagues from Nepal and Newfoundland; along with 8,700 Australians and 2,700 New Zealanders. The allied wounded numbered around 100,000. The Turkish forces, fighting to defend their homeland, suffered the most dreadful casualties of all – perhaps 87,000 dead and up to 160,000 injured.

I must admit, I find the casualty numbers difficult to comprehend. I can't visualise that many people. While preparing these remarks, I came across one figure that has stayed in my mind. At the end of the first day, that is 98 years ago today, 2,000 ANZACs lay dead. There are about 1,000 of us here this morning. From where I'm standing, that looks like a lot of individuals. To lose twice as many as we have gathered here – in one day – is hard to imagine.

Despite these losses, in the history of the Great War the Gallipoli campaign made no large mark. The number of dead, although horrific, paled in comparison with the number that died elsewhere.

But for Australia and New Zealand, the Gallipoli campaign gave us a proud start on the path to individual national identities. It was the first time we fought as independent nations – independent but interlinked, as the name ANZAC implies. The ANZAC relationship endures and to this day our two peoples retain enormous respect and affection for each other.

A remarkable feature of the Gallipoli campaign is the bond that now joins Australia, New Zealand and Turkey. Mutual respect has led to true friendship.

For each of us, ANZAC day has its own meaning and traditions. I first started attending dawn services with my father when I was about 12 years old. I'm not really sure why I started going – there was probably an element of excitement at getting up in the dark, wrapping up warm, and standing at the Wellington Cenotaph in torchlight. But whatever the reason, I'm so pleased I did.

When I first started attending, the numbers were relatively small. While there were few people my age, there were many veterans particularly of World War II. On that day, they would share their stories – initially recalling amusing episodes but relatively quickly moving on to stories that seemed a world away. And to me, they were.

It was during those discussions that I gained a greater understanding of the wider sacrifices made. The casualties of war included those who returned home bearing lifelong scars – physical or emotional – as a result of their experiences.

It also included those left behind, particularly the mothers, wives and sisters. As the New Zealand Governor-General said this morning "with about 100,000 men away, women helped keep the farms and factories – and of course the families – of New Zealand going".

This morning – we honour them all.

Today is also a time to remember other places around the world where the ANZAC spirit has endured. ANZACs lie not only in Gallipoli. Here at Kranji, for example, Australians and New Zealanders lie buried side-by-side with many from other countries.

We pay tribute to veterans still with us – those who served in the Second World War, and places such as Korea, Malaya, Viet Nam, Bosnia, Timor-Leste, Afghanistan, and across the Pacific, Africa, and the Middle East.

And alongside these veterans we also acknowledge the Australians and New Zealanders – and their families – who continue to serve. We thank them for their contribution.

So, here we stand on this most significant day, along with thousands of others across the world – to remember.

We remember the courage, the selflessness, and the sacrifice. We also remember the horror and the sheer waste of life. To truly honour the sacrifices made, we need to do all that is within our power to build a more peaceful world.

In that way, we will remember them.

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