



Australian High Commission

Kenya

**Address by First Secretary, Australian High Commission,
Simon Anderson, at the Anzac Day Dawn Service in Kampala, Uganda, 25th April 2015**

Good morning. I would like to warmly welcome you all to the Kampala's first official ANZAC Day ceremony. It's great to see so many Australians and New Zealanders, and especially children, here today.

I would also like to warmly welcome the members of the diplomatic corps, defence attachés and representatives of the Ugandan Government who have joined us today. Can I recognise in particular my friend the Ambassador of Turkey, Mrs. Ayse Sedef Yavuzalp. Your country has honoured the ANZACs that fell at Gallipoli and embraced them as your own sons. Your country has named a place in honour of our heroes, at ANZAC Cove. No nation could have better guarded our shrines on Turkish shores or more generously welcomed our pilgrims.

Ladies and gentleman

Our debt to Turkey is a deep one. But our debt to the ANZACs is deeper.

At dawn on 25 April 1915, 100 years ago today, 16,000 men from Australia and New Zealand landed on the shores of Gallipoli. Together with forces from Britain, India and France, they were to open the Dardanelles, and begin a campaign intended to give allied shipping access to the Black Sea, bring help to Russia, and perhaps force Turkey out of the war.

But it was an ill-conceived campaign in pursuit of a vague objective, premised on an under-estimation of the military prowess and character of the Turkish soldiers. More than 2000 soldiers were killed on the first day. Over the next eight months, 50,000 ANZACS were committed to the battle, alongside substantially more British, French and Indian comrades. Upon their withdrawal, about 11,000 New Zealanders and Australians lay dead, and with them many more allied and Turkish soldiers.

The campaign cannot be described as anything other than a defeat.

But the achievements of the ANZACs can be measured in other than strategy, tactics and battles. Their true achievements were in the quality of their human endeavor: their courage, determination, mateship and sacrifice. These were achievements that inspired their countrymen for generations to follow.

Their deeds gave rise to the ANZAC Spirit. But what is this spirit?

Historian Charles Bean describes the evacuation of the ANZACs from Gallipoli after eight horrible months. He says that, after the troops had gone:

“...Anzac stood, and still stands, for reckless valour in a good cause, for enterprise, resourcefulness, fidelity, comradeship, and endurance that will never own defeat.”

The ANZACs gave Australia and New Zealand a moment in history to inspire us and a tale to build a national identity on. Theirs were lives of bravery and sacrifice inspired by patriotism, by high ideals, by faith, by a chance of adventure, by friendship and by a love of country. They left Australia and New Zealand with a legacy of belief in ourselves and, for countries so young, our democracies.

The notion of the ANZAC Spirit has its critics. But I believe it is a notion that describes the qualities of being an Australian, or a New Zealander. The men and women who forged the ANZAC spirit all understood the values of independence, freedom and fairness and - above all - possessed a willingness to defend these things if need be.

The ANZAC Spirit is about standing-up against injustice; it's about supporting those worse off than ourselves; it's about rejecting the mob, believing in the good in people, and doing what is right.

It is a notion that describes the qualities of many of you here today: far away from home, in a foreign land, volunteering, committed to doing your best to help those who need it.

ANZAC Day is not a day for stirring military parades, or a day to glorify conflict. It is instead a day of community, a day for veterans and their families, of reunions, of

services like this one. It is a day for reflecting on what the ANZACs set out to achieve, and the legacy they left with us. And it is a day for reflecting on just how lucky we are to live in peace and how precious peace is.

More than 130,000 people died during the Gallipoli campaign: two-thirds of them fought for the Ottoman Empire. We here have learnt the hard way the value of peace. We can honour the ANZACs, especially in Africa, by letting them inspire us to contribute to peace and a better world.

Lest we forget.