



Australian High Commission

Kenya

**Address by the Australian High Commissioner, John Feakes,
at the Anzac Day Dawn Service at Nairobi War Cemetery, 25th April 2015**

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for coming today.

I'd like to especially thank the Kenyan Government for their assistance.

We meet here to honour the heroism, tenacity, and resilience of a group of young men from Australia and New Zealand who landed at Gallipoli one hundred years ago where they joined British, French and Canadian forces and fought in a campaign designed to relieve pressure on our ally, Russia. By this it was hoped that the duration of World War One would be shortened considerably. But the strength of the Turks and, let it be said their bravery, prevented the allies' success.

In the silence before dawn 100 years ago, those soldiers stormed the beaches at what later became known as ANZAC Cove. Despite thick scrub and heavy waterlogged uniforms, these young, untested men advanced steadily onwards and upwards; towards withering gunfire, impossible terrain and a determined enemy. Over two thousand Australians were killed or wounded on that first day.

They faced this terrifying ordeal with courage, camaraderie and honour. They did not shirk their duty.

The bloody and bitterly fought campaign for possession of the Gallipoli peninsula would eventually extend for eight long months. It would require the troops to endure constant deprivation and bear up to the opposite extremes of summer heat and winter cold. It would result in more than 400,000 killed and wounded among the Turkish and Allied forces. Twenty-six thousand of these casualties were Australian. There can be no hierarchy of loss, but the casualties suffered by the New Zealanders and the Turks were truly appalling. We must also never forget the losses suffered by our other allies. The British alone lost 21,000 men.

As the first Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZACs) waded ashore at ANZAC Cove 100 years ago today, none of them could have imagined the legacy they would create.

It is on the shores of Gallipoli that the ANZAC legend was forged. From the grinding hardships and terrible sacrifices of the Gallipoli campaign emerged a distinctly Australian and New Zealand identity - one which recognised the importance of sticking by your mates, overcoming great adversity, putting the interests of others above yours and getting the job done. These are values that defined both countries and made us what we are today. These

qualities are not simply military related. These qualities are shared national values. They reflect what our societies and I am sure many others holds true.

In August 1915, Private H.V.Reynolds who was at Gallipoli wrote in his diary that: "the average Australian will stand up to his job and see it through, or go down in the attempt, until it is humanly impossible to do more." The same can be said of all those who fought then and have done so since.

ANZAC Day is not about glorifying war; it is about honouring ordinary soldiers who were sent to do extraordinary things for their countries, and who did so willingly and bravely. There is no sacrifice greater than that made by those that we send to war.

These words perhaps capture it best.

“For those of us spared the terrors of war, to be worthy of our dead, is to remember them. It is to remember that they died, the men and women of this community, in their thousands, in faraway lands, interred in the ground upon which they perished.

It is to remember those who loved them; their fathers and mothers, wives, children and friends. It is to remember that the pain in the hearts of those who loved them, who lived after them, never healed; the promise of their lives together, unfulfilled.

It is to remember that many who returned were also harmed, so that they and their families continued to suffer. When we wish for peace it is to remember that the lasting meaning of their suffering – their warning to those who follow – remains unheeded so long as there is war.

For while their service has ended – their battlefields covered over with meadow, field and forest, jungle and desert sand – let us make of their absence a powerful presence. May we forever hold them in our minds, and the loved ones they left behind.”

So today is about honouring that nobility of sacrifice which is so poignantly captured by the inscription you can see on many of the graves here: greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

Today we remember not only the original ANZACS, but those who have served and died in all wars and conflicts.

This inscription adorns memorials all over the world...

“When you go home, tell them of us and say, for your tomorrow, we gave our today.”

We will remember them. Lest we forget.