

## Primary School

### Version 1

Thank you for asking me to come and talk to you this morning to commemorate ANZAC day, which most Australians, recognise as one of the most important days of the year.

**ANZAC....** Now that's an unusual word.... Originally it was not a proper word, it was a set of initials which described the Australian and New Zealand soldiers who were in Egypt in the first world war. The initials stood for Australian and New Zealand army corps and in 1915, those men, together with British, Indian and French soldiers were sent to fight in the part of Turkey known as the Gallipoli peninsula. It was because of the way those Australians and New Zealanders fought, and the way they faced the hardships and dangers which confronted them that the initials became a word - ANZAC - which today is respected in both Australia and New Zealand.

Their actions forged what has become known as the ANZAC spirit and that spirit has been the driving force behind all Australian servicemen and women ever since - in France, later on in world war 11, Korea, Malaysia, Borneo and Vietnam, all of which happened long before you were born. It is also present in the peacekeeping operations our service people undertake today.

What does the ANZAC spirit mean? I believe it is a short word for a number of qualities which all of us, not just men and women serving in the Navy, Army and Air Force, can usefully use in our everyday lives.

The ANZAC spirit represents a sense of purpose and direction. The original ANZAC's knew what they had to do, they knew of the dangers and the difficulties but they got down and did not let those difficulties stop them from obeying their orders. It is true that the whole campaign did not achieve what was hoped for. But the soldiers on the ground stayed until their leaders decided it was time to withdraw.

You can apply this to your everyday life. You know what work you have to do at school and what tasks your parents may have set you to do about the house. No matter what difficulties you think are in the way, think of the ANZAC's and others who have followed them and push the difficulties to one side and do accomplish your task.

Secondly, the ANZAC spirit represents an acceptance of responsibility. This is another quality you should apply in your everyday lives. Take responsibility for everything you do. It is easy to say 'I did that' or 'that's my work' when everything goes right. We all know that sometimes things do not go right. Sometimes you do something which is against the wishes of your parents and teachers. Remember the ANZAC spirit and take responsibility for what you are doing.

The ANZAC spirit also includes a sense of compassion. This has been summed up in the Australian experience as mateship. This means to watch out for your mate, help him or her at all times and don't poke fun at other people at school because they may have had some misfortune, or come from a different part of the world.

So these three very simple things are what we mean when we talk about the ANZAC spirit. Another word you can apply to this same spirit is unselfishness.

Now, I like every other person hopes that Australia will never be involved in another war - and that you will never be called upon to experience such a terrible thing. But you should use these things i have talked about - a sense of purpose; acceptance of responsibility and unselfishness, not only while you are at school, but whatever you do in your lives. If you do this you will be keeping the faith with those who put the word ANZAC into our language and you will be helping to make sure that the ANZAC spirit is always part of life in Australia.

## Version 2

Tomorrow is ANZAC day, a day when we remember the anniversary of the landings of Australian and New Zealand soldiers of ANZAC's, as we now call them, on some beaches far away from Australian shores. The place where the ANZAC's landed is called Gallipoli, a part of a country called Turkey. Tomorrow throughout Australia, New Zealand and many parts of the world, ceremonies will be conducted to honour the memory of those brave ANZAC's.

Well, what happened? Very early in the morning, when it was still dark, thirty six large rowing boats, loaded with Australian and New Zealand soldiers and towed by naval boats, left the protection of the larger British ships and set off for the beaches of Gallipoli. They were about to invade Turkey.

An hour and a half later, the first boats crunched against the rock and sand of a place now called ANZAC cove. The soldiers scrambled ashore and started to climb up the steep slopes. As enemy machinegun fire came down on them, many were killed or wounded in those first few hours ashore. In the dark, many of the boats had drifted off course and had landed quite a long way away from where they should have been. They had. In fact, landed where the Turkish forces were the strongest and where the machine-gun and artillery fire were thickest.

By two o'clock that afternoon, some 12,000 men had landed. Later that day, some very brave Australians reached the heights overlooking the beaches, however they were soon forced to turn back, never to return. Within a month, over half of those who had landed at Gallipoli were either dead or wounded.

For seven long months, the ANZAC's hung on to their positions on the cliffs and slopes of ANZAC cove. The Australians and New Zealanders could not go forward but neither could the stubborn Turks force them back into the sea. In those months a spirit developed amongst the soldiers - a spirit which relied on each soldier helping out his mates.

By the end of that year, 1915, some 32,000 Australians and New Zealanders had been killed or wounded at Gallipoli. The battle had been a military failure, the ANZAC's had lost and they were forced to withdraw and leave Turkey.

The battle was over, but in those months when so many Australians had died under terrible conditions of heat and cold, of sickness, of suffering, of lack of sleep, and food and shelter, in these months the legend of ANZAC was born.

Well, why do we now remember this occasion? The ANZAC story shows us how important it was and still is to do our very best for our country Australia and to fight for what we believe is right. The story tells us that we must always be loyal to our country, and to our friends, no matter what the cost and to do everything as well as we possibly can. The example of the men of ANZAC and later generations of Australian service men and women should inspire us today. Those men and women believed in mateship, of helping out a mate or a friend, they were determined and courageous people. They were true Australians.

ANZAC day is not about talking of war and fighting as something fantastic. It is a reminder that war is horrible and while we should be proud of what the ANZAC's and other Australian soldiers have done, we should always remember that there are never any winners in wars.

For those who are going to watch a parade tomorrow and see all the old soldiers who are still alive marching, or if you see them on television tomorrow night, remember that we should be proud of all of them because they have gone to war to fight to make Australia what it is today. You should clap them and thank them for what they have done for us - they have kept Australia a free and wonderful country in which to live.

### Version 3

ANZAC day is very special as it commemorates the fateful landing of the men from Australia and New Zealand at ANZAC cove on the 25th April 1915. Many people will this year attend dawn services throughout Australia; however, many others in Australia will think of the day accepting it as just another holiday. But ANZAC day is not just another holiday, nor is it a day set aside to celebrate war and all the dreadful things it involves. ANZAC day is a day of commemoration, to say 'thank you' and to honour all soldiers, from all wars, who have fought, and more importantly died, for Australia, for it is these men and womens' sacrifices that allow you to live in a comfortable home and have the opportunity to attend such a nice school.

Many people ask why it is that we use the day the ANZAC's landed on the Gallipoli peninsula at the start of a lost campaign to commemorate the people involved in fighting for the Australians' beliefs. Why is it not that we use the day the war ended or perhaps the day a great battle was won? Why commemorate a defeat? The answer is that Australia is different, indeed Australians are different because of ANZAC. Before the Gallipoli campaign, Australians, who had an enthusiasm for Australia, had a greater patriotism for the old country, England. That is to say that they still accepted England as home even though they lived in Australia. When Australians were called in 1915 to fight, they enlisted partly for a sense of adventure and partly because the empire needed them. The Australians were, however, an untried force which the British thought to be unruly and undisciplined. It was at ANZAC that the reputation started of the Australian soldiers as being tough men, men who could endure, men who could go on fighting, no matter what. It was ANZAC that it was seen that the Australians, even if beaten, were great fighters and their loss was not due to lack of courage, stamina or spirit. It was at ANZAC that the legend of the Australian soldier was born and Australia was seen, not just as another country in the British Empire, but as a country in its own right.

It is therefore a good day, a special day for you and all Australians to say 'thank you' to people who have given us all so much.

I am sure that most of you know the story of Simpson and his donkey; but for those of you who don't, Simpson was an Australian soldier at Gallipoli who, with his donkey, Murphy, unselfishly helped the wounded from the area where there was fighting to ANZAC cove and safety. Having saved countless soldiers this, he was eventually killed. It is important that all of us think about Simpson and his unselfish work because it is Simpson and thousands of others who have unselfishly given their time and lives for us that we commemorate ANZAC day.

So, don't just think that it is just another holiday, remember that it is a very special day. A special day when all Australians should say 'thank you' to all those men and women who have fought and died to allow you to have your choice in a country that is free.

ANZAC is indeed a special day. Lest we forget.

#### Version 4

On the 25th of April 1915, a group of volunteer Australian and New Zealand soldiers found themselves wading ashore before dawn at a small beach on the Gallipoli peninsula in Turkey; now known as ANZAC cove. They were members of the Australian and New Zealand army corps, and called themselves ANZAC's. Many of these men were only teenagers, some as young as 16. All were anxious to prove that as the representatives of their new nation they would not be found lacking in courage and military ability; and that they could acquit themselves at least as well as the soldiers of older, more established countries of Europe. The events of the first ANZAC day are the unbreakable and permanent foundation for our nation building. The question of national identity is very important.

The Australian nation was at the time of Gallipoli only 14 years old; and it had yet to form an identity to call its own. It believed it had achieved nothing great or heroic from the national standpoint, but was about to be called upon to do so.

For eight months after the first landings, those young ANZAC's underwent a 'trial by ordeal'. 36,000 Australian and New Zealand soldiers were killed or wounded at Gallipoli.

In that terrible battle at Gallipoli, and in the associated hospitals and training camps, young Australians earned a reputation for courage, self-reliance and mateship. The experience drew Australians together as a nation and established an Australian character and set standards for all the soldiers, sailors and airmen who followed them in the First World War, and in all subsequent wars.

At Gallipoli so many years ago, those young men and women found out what it is to be an Australian. Our vast dry country with its harsh beauty, open skies and tiny population helps shape healthy, confident, competitive and freedom loving individuals who; with good leadership and high motivation, can more than match the best people in the world in whatever they do.

I believe this why Australians come together every ANZAC day. We do it to remember the ANZAC's and their achievements; and we should remember them not as old soldiers from a forgotten war, but as the young Australians they were in 1915. We must celebrate their triumph over great adversity. They set very high standards for those who followed them.

The ANZAC's thought of themselves as Australians, although many could trace their origins back to other countries and different cultures. They understood that where we come from to live in this great country is of far less importance than what we become in time: Australians.

Over the years the numbers of the world war one and two veterans who survive to march on ANZAC day has reduced dramatically. In time, all the veterans of more recent wars will also disappear. If we wish to remember into the next century the example of service to the nation they set for us since April 1915 we should replace those men and women with their children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and friends.....people like yourselves.

The Australian characteristics confirmed at Gallipoli must never be forgotten, and we need to reinforce them in our every day lives. The ANZAC's showed us that Australians have a unique quality which allows us to hold our heads high in the international community. We have the ability to face challenges together and overcome them, to put community before self, to be courageous, determined, self-reliant and strong competitors.

**Their actions forged what has become known as the ANZAC spirit and that spirit has been the driving force behind all Australian servicemen and women ever since....later in WW1 and WW2, Korea, Malaysia, Borneo, and Vietnam, all of which happened long before you were born. It is also present in the peacekeeping operations our service people undertake today.**

**This is the spirit of ANZAC; handed down over the years from one generation of Australians to the next and now to you. In recent years the spirit of ANZAC has captured the imagination of so many young people.**

**For the sake of the future of this great country, we need to carry the spirit of ANZAC with us always as we continue the task of building a better Australia for your future.**

## Version 5

Another year, another ANZAC day: another time to pause and reflect on why we, and thousands like us gather at services similar to this throughout Australia and New Zealand. The number of veterans dwindle year by year but the memory of their courage; their determination and their friendship will last forever. It is rekindled around this time every year by those who are left behind. It is passed on to sons, daughters, and grandchildren. Sometimes it may not be apparent in the young - but rest assured it is there.

The first ANZAC's gathered in their thousands to 'answer the call'. In August 1914, when Great Britain declared war on Germany, men - young men - some no more than boys, rushed to join the long queues at army barracks around Australia. Some believed they had no choice but to protect England from invasion. Some thought it was a once in a lifetime opportunity to travel, while others just didn't want to miss out on something exciting. 'Don't worry', they told their mothers, wives and girlfriends, 'it will be over by Christmas'.

The following year on the morning of April 25th, these ANZAC's prepared to launch themselves against the Turks at Gallipoli. Can you imagine the fear; the nervousness; the excitement - the doubts these young Australians felt. By the end of that first day, 2,000 ANZAC's lay dead. A week later 6,500 ANZAC's had been killed or wounded. But the courage, the determination and their mateship kept them together. They had won the first of many battles but at a terrible cost. From Gallipoli through the western front to the middle east, where the Australian light horsemen continued the battle. Their ANZAC spirit saw them through sometimes horrific conditions.

When the 'Great War' ended in November 1918, over 61,000 ANZAC's would never see Australia's shore again. But their spirit came home - the spirit of ANZAC. Throughout the years many more young Australians would answer the call. Again in 1939, the German Empire struck towards what many still considered 'the Motherland'.

To our north, a 'yellow peril' was confronting our own homeland. The ANZAC spirit flared again. Young men and women answered the call to help those in need. They did so because they believed in what they were doing and had the courage, the determination and that ANZAC spirit.

We in Australia have never had our communities demolished, or our freedom removed. To some, war has always been a long way off - not our concern. The world is a much smaller place these days. Within a day's travel you could be in Sydney - or on the other side of the world. We do live in a lucky country, but while we strive for peace on earth, we must be ready to answer the call in time of need.

The thousands of young ANZAC's who fought for freedom and justice throughout the world did so that generations to come could live without the horrors of war. That they could enjoy their freedom and the kind of life all ANZAC's wished for.

At this service today, remember the ANZAC's. Remember their courage, their determination and their spirit. To the veterans - hold your heads high - you have served your country well. To the families and friends of departed comrades, remember they gave their lives so that you could survive. To the young, remember that this world is being passed to your hands. Use it well and remember, that without the sacrifices of the ANZAC's, you may not have had a world such as you know it in which to live.

Through the mists of years - through the gulfs of twilight - could we but listen hard enough, we might catch some message of hope and encouragement from those who gave their lives for our freedom. We might hear 'we are the dead.... To you from failing hands we throw the torch; be yours to hold it high. If ye break faith with us who die, we shall not sleep.....' - Keep the spirit of the ANZAC's alive.