

DAWN SERVICE

DAWN SERVICE 1

WE MEET HERE, AT THIS BLEAK HOUR, ON THIS DAY EVERY YEAR, TO HONOUR THE HEROISM, TENACITY, AND RESILIENCE OF THAT GROUP OF YOUNG MEN WHOSE UNITS WERE SENT TO GALLIPOLI WHERE, CONNECTING UP WITH EQUALLY RAW YOUNG MEN FROM NEW ZEALAND, THEY JOINED BRITISH AND FRENCH FORCES AND FOUGHT IN A CAMPAIGN DESIGNED TO RELIEVE PRESSURE ON OUR ALLY, RUSSIA, BY OPENING UP PERMANENT AND SAFE SEA COMMUNICATIONS WITH EASTERN EUROPE AND BRINGING THE BALKANS ON TO OUR SIDE. BY THIS IT WAS HOPED THAT THE DURATION OF THE WAR WOULD BE SHORTENED CONSIDERABLY.

BUT THE OVERWHELMING STRENGTH OF THE TURKS AND, LET IT BE SAID THEIR BRAVERY, PREVENTED THE ALLIES' SUCCESS.

THE TOTAL GALLIPOLI CASUALTIES ON OUR SIDE, INCLUDING THE FRENCH AND NAVAL, WERE 33,000 KILLED, 78,000 WOUNDED AND 8,000 MISSING. OF THESE, THE AUSTRALIANS MADE UP 8,500 OF THOSE KILLED AND MORE THAN 19,000 OF THOSE WOUNDED.

BUT THE SHOCK NEWS OF THESE CASUALTIES, FAR FROM WEAKENING THIS COUNTRY'S RESOLVE AT THAT TIME, ACTUALLY SERVED TO STRENGTHEN IT, FOR THE RECRUITING RATE INCREASED – AND I DO NOT NEED TO EXPLAIN TO YOU THAT THEY WERE ALL VOLUNTEERS.

AS THE NEWS OF THE CASUALTIES BEGAN TO FILTER BACK TO AUSTRALIA, SO DID THE HEROISM OF THE ANZACS – FROM ALL SOURCES: FROM THE BRITISH – AMAZED AT THE TOUGHNESS, THE RESILIENCE AND THE TENACITY OF OUR HITHERTO UNTRIED SOLDIERS; FROM THE FRENCH, FROM THE NAVIES INVOLVED, AND FROM OUR OWN WAR CORRESPONDENTS LIKE C.E.W. BEAN AND FROM WAR ARTISTS LIKE GEORGE LAMBERT – AND NOT LEAST, FROM THE ENEMY THEMSELVES.

THE WAY THESE ANZACS BORE THE BRUNT OF THE FIGHT IN THE DARDANELLES STIRRED IN AUSTRALIANS EVERYWHERE A NEW FEELING OF CAMARADERIE, A FEELING THAT MATCHED THE WAY IN WHICH THE REST OF THE WORLD SUDDENLY BEGAN TO LOOK AT AUSTRALIA – NOT JUST AS AN OFFSHOOT OF BRITAIN, BUT AS AN INDEPENDENT NATION OF A VERY INDEPENDENT CHARACTER.

AND THIS VIEW OF OURSELVES, AND THE WORLD'S VIEW OF US, CONTINUES TODAY, THANKS, TO THAT SPIRIT FORGED IN THE FIRES OF GALLIPOLI.

WE MUST NOT EVER FORGET, THOUGH, WHAT THAT SPIRIT DEMANDED; OR THE LIVES THOSE MEN GAVE IN THE NAME OF OUR NATION.

WE MUST RESOLVE ANEW THAT WE WILL MAKE THIS NATION, AUSTRALIA, INTO ONE WORTHY OF THEIR SACRIFICE.

MY GENERATION KNOWS WHAT IT IS WAS LIKE: WHAT DEMANDS WERE MADE, NOT ONLY ON OUR SERVICEMEN AND WOMEN, BUT ON THE HOME FRONT, TOO.

AND WE KNOW IN OUR BONES HOW EASILY IT COULD HAPPEN AGAIN, AND HOW QUICKLY THE SITUATION COULD ARISE – AND HOW SUDDENLY THIS COUNTRY COULD BE AT THE MERCY OF AN AGGRESSOR. AND THEN, IF WE TREASURE OUR FREEDOM, OUR CIVIL LIBERTIES, OUR FREE SPEECH – OUR VERY LIVES, IN FACT – THEN WE WILL ALL NEED THAT SPIRIT OF ANZAC. WE MUST NEVER LET IT DIE.

DAWN SERVICE 2

IT IS HEARTENING TO SEE THE INCREASING NUMBER OF PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY OUR YOUNGER GENERATIONS, ATTENDING THESE DAWN SERVICES AND THE ANZAC DAY MARCH. I KNOW THE EVER DECREASING RANKS OF OUR VETERANS VALUE YOUR ATTENDANCE.

TODAY IS A SPECIAL DAY WHEN WE REMEMBER ALL THOSE, WHETHER SERVICE PERSONNEL OR CIVILIANS, OF EVERY NATION, WHO SUFFERED OR CONTINUE TO SUFFER THROUGH WAR. IN PARTICULAR WE REMEMBER THOSE WHO SERVED IN THE AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCES ON ACTIVE SERVICE FROM THE BOER WAR TO RWANDA, INCLUDING THOSE CURRENTLY SERVING WITH THE UN MISSIONS. WE REMEMBER THOSE WHO PAID THE SUPREME SACRIFICE SO THAT WE, AND THE PEOPLE OF OTHER NATIONS, CAN LIVE IN PEACE. WE REMEMBER THOSE WHO CONTINUE TO SUFFER THROUGH THEIR PHYSICAL OR MENTAL SCARS, INCLUDING THOSE NEXT OF KIN WHOSE GRIEF AND SENSE OF LOSS CAN NEVER BE EASED.

THIS IS ALSO A DAY OF THANKS AND QUIET REFLECTION ON WHAT A WONDERFUL, LUCKY NATION WE LIVE IN. IT IS A TIME TO REFLECT ON AUSTRALIA'S COMMITMENT TO CONTINUE TO CONTRIBUTE TO PEACE IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD. WE CANNOT ISOLATE OURSELVES AND IGNORE THESE RESPONSIBILITIES. IN A PERFECT WORLD THERE WOULD BE NO WARS, NO AGGRESSION AND NO REQUIREMENT TO MAINTAIN DEFENCE FORCES. UNFORTUNATELY THIS IS NOT A PERFECT WORLD AND THERE ARE MORE AREAS OF CONFLICT THAN EVER BEFORE. WHERE NECESSARY, TO PRESERVE THE PEACE IN OUR REGION OR ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD, WE MUST BE PREPARED TO DEPLOY OUR FORCES TO FIGHT FOR OR PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF OUR NEIGHBOURS AND OUR OWN NATION. AS WE LIVE IN A DEMOCRACY WE MUST ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT THESE DECISIONS ARE MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT, NOT BY THE DEFENCE FORCE. IN REALITY THESE DECISIONS ARE MADE BY THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE, BY YOU AND ME. WE ELECT THE GOVERNMENT TO REPRESENT US AND TO MAKE THOSE DECISIONS TO DEFEND US. THIS IS AN ENORMOUS RESPONSIBILITY AND ONE WHICH WE MUST NEVER FORGET. WE, THEREFORE, SHARE THE BURDEN AND WE MUST NEVER LAY THE BLAME ON OUR DEFENCE FORCES FOR BEING DEPLOYED ON OPERATIONS. HISTORIANS WILL ARGUE ABOUT THE RIGHTS AND WRONGS OF THESE POLITICAL DECISIONS, AS THEY SHOULD. HOWEVER, OUR FORCES HAVE MERELY GONE WHERE THE COUNTRY HAS ORDERED THEM TO GO. THEY HAVE DISTINGUISHED THEMSELVES IN EVERY

THEATRE BY THEIR PROFESSIONALISM AND THEIR COMPASSION. NO ONE CAN OR SHOULD DEMAND MORE THAN THAT.

SOME SAY THIS DAY GLORIFIES WAR, BUT EVERY VETERAN WILL BE THE FIRST TO SAY THAT THEIR GREATEST WISH AND MOST FERVENT PRAYER IS THAT THEIR CHILDREN AND THIS NATION MAY NEVER HAVE TO WITNESS THE HORRORS OF WAR AGAIN. WE MUST NEVER FORGET THAT NORTHERN AUSTRALIA HAS ALREADY BEEN SUBJECTED TO WAR, FROM ONSLO TO BROOME, DERBY, WYNDHAM, KALUMBURU, DARWIN, MANINGRIDA, KATHERINE, BATCHELOR, GOVE PENINSULA, HORN ISLAND, AND TOWNSVILLE, AND THAT BOTH SERVICE PERSONNEL AND CIVILIANS HAVE BEEN KILLED IN THESE ACTIONS ON THEIR HOME SOIL. LET US PRAY THAT THIS IS NEVER REPEATED.

AS THE RANKS OF OUR VETERANS CONTINUE TO DIMINISH, LET US BE DETERMINED TO MAINTAIN THIS SPECIAL DAY SO THAT WE CAN TAKE A BREAK FROM THE ROLLER COASTER OF LIFE TO REFLECT ON HOW FORTUNATE WE ARE, TO REFLECT ON OUR FREEDOM. TO RECOGNISE THE FUTILITY OF WAR BUT TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WE MUST BE PREPARED TO DEFEND THIS FREEDOM AND THOSE OF OTHER NATIONS AS HISTORY IS REplete WITH PEACEFUL NATIONS BEING SUBJECTED TO AGGRESSION.

I WOULD LIKE TO FINISH WITH AN EXCERPT FROM A BOOK BY JOHN HEPWORTH, TITLED 'THE LONG GREEN SHORE' - ABOUT OUR DIGGERS IN PNG - 'THEY PINNED NO MEDALS ON HIM, THEY MADE NO SPEECHES, WE NEED NO MEDALS OR SPEECHES, WE KNOW HIM AND REMEMBER. HE WAS JUST A GOOD, ORDINARY BLOKE - THAT'S A POINT - THAT'S AN IMPORTANT THING - HE WAS AN ORDINARY BLOKE LIKE YOU AND ME'. LET US REMEMBER ALL THE YOUNG AUSTRALIANS WHO SACRIFICED THE PLEASURE OF GROWING OLD WITH THEIR FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND FRIENDS SO THAT WE COULD ENJOY THESE FREEDOMS AND ENJOY THE PLEASURE OF LISTENING TO THE BIRDS AND THE VOICES OF THOSE WE LOVE.

SHOULD THREATS DEVELOP IN THE FUTURE, LET US PRAY THAT THE AUSTRALIAN PEOPLE HAVE THE SAME COURAGE AND RESOLVE AS OUR FOREBEARS TO KEEP THIS GREAT, VERY SPECIAL NATION OF OURS FREE AND THAT WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO CONTRIBUTING TO PEACE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.