

**Address by John Campbell  
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Wellington Dawn Service  
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Time dims the memory of ordinary events, but not great events in a Nations history – great events whether in peace or war live on in our memories, regardless of time. They are deemed great not necessarily for what they achieve, nor for whether they are reckoned to be victories or successes. Rather the great events are distinguished by the quality of the human endeavour they call upon, by the examples they create for ordinary men and women – and by the legends they inspire.

So it was with Gallipoli.

On 25<sup>th</sup> April 1915, 16,000 New Zealanders and Australians surged ashore at the foot of rugged cliffs on the Dardanelles peninsula, in Turkey, to open a campaign intended to give allied shipping access to the Black Sea, bring help to Russia, and perhaps force Turkey out of the war.

It was – historians say – 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, and of the tactical advantages they held.

But the cream of the New Zealand and Australian armies – volunteers all – committed themselves with no hesitation about the nobility of their cause, and fought with great courage, skill and audacity. In the eight months which followed their first landing, some 50,000 ANZACs were committed to the battlefield, alongside 36,000 British, French and Indian comrades. When the last of them was withdrawn as winter set in, more than 11,000 New Zealanders and Australians lay dead and with them many more allied and Turkish soldiers.

Gallipoli was a tactical defeat but the achievements of the ANZACs were to be measured other than on the battlefield. It was not just that New Zealanders and Australians were serving overseas in the name of their fledgling nations for the first time.

For New Zealanders and Australians, ANZAC is our own day.

It is a day on which we mark the deeds of men and women who had come to see themselves as New Zealanders and who were mourned by people who regarded themselves as New Zealanders.

The first ANZACs indeed command and deserve the respect and remembrance of present and future generations of all New Zealanders and Australians, regardless of race, colour and creed.

It was Gallipoli which gave us pride, not in war, but in the knowledge that Kiwis when put to the test would not fail. That spirit and tradition has sustained our forces in many later battles and trials – and in many ways sustains us now.

The men who forged the ANZAC spirit and the men and women who followed them earned their respect. They all understood the values of independence, freedom and fairness – and above all possessed a willingness to defend those things if need be. Because freedom only survives as long as people are willing to defend it.

That is the spirit of ANZAC handed down to us. If we lose that ANZAC spirit we lose all.

**So here we stand today, alongside tens of thousands of others in cities and townships throughout New Zealand to honour great men and women and a great tradition. We gather as we shall always gather, not to glorify war, but to remind ourselves that we value who we are and the freedoms we possess, and to acknowledge the courage and sacrifice of those who contributed so much in shaping the identity of this proud nation.**

**In the face of adversity the original ANZACs demonstrated beyond any doubt the necessary military virtues of duty, courage, teamwork, resolution and self sacrifice.**

**But to those they added a few unique qualities of their own – mateship, trust, a discipline based on earned respect and not assumed worth, initiative, resourcefulness, wry humour and what is often forgotten a respect for the courage and capability of friend and foe alike.**

**These are qualities now imbedded in our national character.**

**A distinguished soldier wrote –**

**“Somewhere between the bloody ridge of Chunuk Bair in 1915 and the black swamp in front of Passchendaele in 1917, New Zealand definitely found individuality and nationality.”**

**So today let us mourn our fallen sons and daughters. But also remember they did not die in vain. They died for the high principles they believed in – peace, freedom and democracy.**

**They brought honour and a new respect for their country.**

**Their legacy should be seen to symbolise New Zealand’s long commitment to peace in the world, as well as its stand against aggression, and for liberty and the rule of international law.**

**In recent years many commentators have expressed amazement of the fact that the observance of ANZAC Day continues to draw record crowds and increasing numbers of young people and children.**

**However, those who are surprised by this fact show that they understand little about our national character.**

**There is something very New Zealand in this. It is like our natural disposition to stick together in adversity – it is a simple gesture of acknowledgment and gratitude – and it flows from the deepest springs of our national character.**

**Young New Zealanders do understand the determination, the tenacity and the courage of our ANZACs. They do know what they did. They know they stood out because of their values and qualities. Understanding these values and achievements should encourage young New Zealanders to develop the necessary personal attributes, skills, knowledge and dedication so they too can achieve their own important place in society. The increasing involvement of youth in the observance of ANZAC Day shows dearly that our young people also remember – and also respect the values that underlie this day. Young people do not know just what it means to veterans when we see them at days like this.**

**Besides the overwhelming desire to remember and pay respect, there is slowly emerging in this day’s observance, a hint of celebration of our heritage and identity. New Zealanders are learning to applaud their veterans as they pass in the veterans’ parade, where once they stood in solemn silence. Applaud them while they are still with us.**

**These words were written by a soldier at the end of World War II –**

**“Everything that was good from that small remote country had gone into them – sunshine and strength, good sense, patience – the versatility of practical men. They had confidence in themselves – knowing themselves as good as the best in the world could bring against them. And they marched into history.”**

**They are words that have applied to each and every generation of Kiwis who are placed in harms way in the nation’s interest.**

**Today we remember all those who have served in all campaigns. Today should remember and mark the participation of our Vietnam veterans. In doing so we should preserve the memory of all those who took part in that war. This became one of the most bitter and divisive issues ever to confront our people. There was no heroes welcome for our Vietnam veterans. They felt betrayed by the nation. We should remember they went because they were sent. They believed in the democratic tradition that the armed forces of a nation should obey the orders of their Government. War is the most wasteful and destructive of all human activities. And it is likely that the Vietnam War – a war which failed in all of its strategic objectives – was the most futile of those fought by New Zealanders. The service of New Zealanders in Vietnam was in the long and honourable tradition of service by New Zealanders throughout our history. They fought in Vietnam as the heirs of the great ANZAC tradition and they look back with pride that they upheld that tradition.**

**We as a fair-minded community should hope that no young New Zealander who answers the call ever returns to a community driven by the division and hostility they found on their homecoming. The voice and focus of dissent should be on those who sent them. That is how it ought to be – and may it always be thus.**

**On this day we should remember –**

**It is those that served, not the reporter who has given us the freedom of the press.**

**It is those that served, not the writer who has given us the freedom of speech.**

**It is those that served, not the protestor who gives us the freedom to demonstrate.**

**It is those who served; who salute the flag, who serve beneath the flag, and whose coffins are draped by the flag, who allow others to criticise the flag.**

**It is those who served and faced the enemy in the battle for survival; it is those who faced the hell of war fighting for his and his comrades lives, who allow the historians – protected by the safety of the passage of time, with the benefit of hindsight, and in the safety of a free society, to interpret or record history as they might see it.**

**These things we should remember.**

**The spirit of ANZAC is as relevant today to all of us as it was all those years ago. We need to be vigilant that our society remains one that values freedom, tolerance and a fair go for all. We need to maintain their sense of commitment, courage and perseverance to get through the tough times. The need for us all to look after each other is probably greater now than in the past – we need to show as sense of humanity and compassion.**

**This day reminds us that wars are to be avoided, but when necessary we must stand up for our values. Young Kiwi men and women on this very day are in harms way around the globe – in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Solomons. We must remember that they are serving our nation. This day requires us to reflect on the past with pride – but also to look ahead and build on the achievements of our predecessors. By displaying the characteristics of the ANZAC spirit, comradeship, unselfishness and tenacity of spirit, we can enrich the New Zealand tradition.**

**The ANZAC spirit exists in each one of us, so therefore let us be guided by that spirit in facing the national and personal challenges ahead, and let us strive to be worthy of the memory of those we honour on ANZAC Day.**

**We should remind ourselves of the inscription seen on War Memorials throughout the country –**

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

**But in the end it hardly matters what I say here today. To paraphrase from Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address –**

**“The country will little note, nor long remember what I say here – but it can never forget what they did there.”**