

ANZAC Day – A Commemoration For All

Of all the holidays and events that roll around throughout the year, ANZAC day is probably the one that resonates most with New Zealanders from all walks of life – as anyone who has attended an ANZAC Day service and seen the crowds paying tribute to our brave servicemen and women can attest.

New Zealand has a distinguished military history – the thought of which makes us stand up a little taller, or hold our heads a little higher – and the poppy is worn with pride by tens of thousands of New Zealanders every year.

ANZAC Day is an opportunity to formally recognise the sacrifice of the men and women of New Zealand's Defence Forces who have shared so much in theatres of war throughout the world. It is an opportunity to honour the courage, commitment and comradeship of the new generation of men and women who are serving our country – and those generations to come.

Further, however, ANZAC Day provides us with an opportunity to recognise the very real sacrifices made by those at home. In the rush of emotion and the heat of battle it is sometimes easy to forget that those who remain behind also serve at home – the mothers, fathers, wives, husbands, children, families and whanau who have given their best so that we might have the best.

As a Minister of the Crown, a Territorial soldier and a proud New Zealander I know that their's is a role that cannot – and should not – ever be forgotten. Because without them, there would be no New Zealand Defence Force. They have given of their families to the NZDF and, in doing so, made the NZDF into the family it is today.

And it is for the families at home, as well as the servicemen and women of New Zealand – past, present and future – for whom I wear the poppy on ANZAC Day.

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