



ANZAC DAY Speech for use in Secondary Schools 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 ANZACs. 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 ANZACs 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 is why Australians come together every ANZAC day. We do it to remember the ANZACs 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 ANZACs 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 ANZACs 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.