



ANZAC DAY Speech for use in Primary Schools 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.