

**LAUNCESTON RSL SUB-BRANCH INC**  
**ANZAC DAY DAWN SERVICE**  
**ADDRESS BY**  
**HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC**  
**GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA**  
**LAUNCESTON CENOTAPH, SATURDAY 25 APRIL 2026**

Good morning.

May I acknowledge all veterans with us, and their families and friends. May I also acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have contributed to the defence of Australia in times of peace and war.

On 25 April 1915, before first light, Australian and New Zealand troops went ashore on the Gallipoli Peninsula. This marked the beginning of a campaign that lasted months, brought immense hardship, and a high cost in Australian lives.

May we remember that Tasmanians made some unique contributions to the campaign. The 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion was substantially drawn from Tasmanians. With the 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Battalions, it formed the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade was assigned as the covering force for the landing on the Gallipoli Peninsula. They were first ashore on what would become known as Anzac Cove.

The 12th Battalion was heavily involved in establishing and defending the front line. It was the first unit to build entrenchments on a systematic and extensive scale. Men worked continuously on the tunnels for 24 hours per day without cessation.<sup>1</sup> To keep the Turkish forces on the watch and to prevent them from detaching reinforcements to oppose a British advance from another part of the Peninsula, “an ingenious ruse” was adopted. The “ruse” was to deceive the Turkish forces into believing that the battalion was several times stronger than it really was. Men were stationed at intervals in the main trenches. On a given signal, they jumped over the top and ran down the hill in front of the position, known as Tasmanian Post. There, they entered the lower trenches and then returned to their original positions using the tunnels. They kept repeating this

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<sup>1</sup> Tasmania’s War Record 1914-1918’ L. Broinowski (Ed) 1921 Gov of Tasmania p14.

“ingenious” manoeuvre. The Turkish troops believed a large force was building up in these lower trenches and bombarded them. But our Tasmanians were safely back in the upper trenches. This Tasmanian trench system was recognised as the most effective and best devised on Gallipoli.<sup>2</sup>

The 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion continued to serve at ANZAC until the evacuation of allied forces in December.<sup>3</sup> But they endured appalling conditions through June, July, and August. There was an outbreak of dysentery, a plague of flies, awful stench, hard food, lack of water and scarcity of sleep.<sup>4</sup>

Notwithstanding this adversity, in August, the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion contributed two companies to the attack on Lone Pine. It was the only battalion in the brigade to do so.<sup>5</sup>

May we remember the bravery, ingenuity, endurance, loyalty to mates and sacrifice made by our soldiers in the Gallipoli campaign. Over 8,700 Australians were killed<sup>6</sup>. And over 60,000 Australians were killed in WWI. 2,432 Tasmanians died, including six Tasmanian Aboriginal men.<sup>7</sup> The loss of so many young men had profound impacts on their communities. Their deaths or wounds broke families.<sup>8</sup> Many of the men who returned suffered physically or mentally. In his book *Tasmanian ANZACS*, Emeritus Professor Stephan Petrow wrote about the devastating physical and mental effects of war on returned soldiers.<sup>9</sup> I quote:

“... So many Tasmanians from different walks of life ... were made of the right stuff and embodied the best ANZAC traditions at considerable personal and familial cost.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> ‘Tasmania’s War Record 1914-1918’ L. Broinowski (Ed) 1921 Gov of Tasmania p14.

<sup>4</sup> ‘Tasmania’s War Record 1914-1918’ L. Broinowski (Ed) 1921 Gov of Tasmania p15.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/U51452>, accessed 21 April 2026

Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/gallipoli/fatalities> accessed 25 Feb 26

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.centenaryofanzac.tas.gov.au/history/tasmanian\\_aboriginal\\_soldiers](https://www.centenaryofanzac.tas.gov.au/history/tasmanian_aboriginal_soldiers) accessed 25 Feb 22

<sup>8</sup> [https://centenaryofanzactas.gov.au/historywomen\\_and\\_world\\_war1](https://centenaryofanzactas.gov.au/historywomen_and_world_war1) accessed 30/3/2023 page 2.

<sup>9</sup> Emeritus Professor Stephan Petrow, *Tasmanian ANZACS: Those Who Served, Their Families and the Impact of World War One. Vol1: The 12<sup>th</sup> and 52<sup>nd</sup> Battalions* p479

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

In recent years, Australia has confronted this painful truth that, for too many who have served, the cost has continued long after they completed their service. May we remember the devastating human cost of war.

This poetic tribute for Major Alexander Arthur Evans, born in Launceston and awarded the Military Cross for conspicuous gallantry at ANZAC Gallipoli,<sup>11</sup> evokes the sadness and human cost of war. May I now recite this poem by Nicole Patrick.

### **The Battle is Done**

The battle is done, the battle is won

I hear my sergeant cry

But how? I still hear the thundering

Of shells falling from this dismal sky

I cry out in the darkness

But no one hears my call

I am alone in this carnage

This battle that consumes my all

I close my eyes and there he is

Lying helpless on the ground

I hear him whisper 'brother, please'

Alas, there the death bell sounds

There was is nothing that could save him

There was nothing I could do

His body is still forevermore

And my soul was split in two

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<sup>11</sup> <https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/?a=238838>, accessed 22 April 2026. Nicole Patrick.

So there he sleeps as in childhood  
Untroubled where he lies  
While a lullaby of whistling shells  
Engulfs me – I am trapped beneath this vaulted sky.<sup>12</sup>

May we remember and acknowledge the sacrifice of all those who served on battlefields and in peacekeeping missions, and those who continue to serve.

We also thank the families who support and have supported those who serve or have served, and who have made sacrifices for the service of their loved ones.

May I, on a personal level, remember my mother and my aunt, both of whom served as translators in the Army's Censorship Section during WWII. May I remember my father, who served as a Lieutenant in the Royal Australian Navy. He was in Darwin and also in Ora Bay, Papua New Guinea, during the Japanese bombings in 1943.

I know many here today will have their own personal stories of service and sacrifice to remember.

We remember those who served and those who did not return.

Lest we forget.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.dpac.tas.gov.au/?a=238838>, accessed 22 April 2026.