

ANZAC DAY 2022
ADDRESS BY
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA
HOBART CENOTAPH, MONDAY 25 APRIL 2022

Good morning. I warmly welcome everyone to the Hobart Cenotaph for our annual Anzac Day commemorations. It is heartening to see young and old, many in uniform, families and veterans' organisations, and representatives from across our Tasmanian community.

I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we are gathered, and pay my respects to their Elders, past, and present. I would also like to pay my respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who have contributed to the defence of Australia in times of peace and war.

I also acknowledge:

- The Honourable Madeleine Ogilvie, representing the Premier
- Senators the Honourable Eric Abetz and the Honourable Jonathan Duniam, representing the Prime Minister
- The Honourable Chief Justice Alan Blow
- Senator Carol Brown, representing the Leader of the Opposition
- Deputy Lord Mayor Councillor Helen Burnet, representing the Lord Mayor
- The Very Reverend Richard Humphrey
- Senator Nick McKim, representing the Greens
- Major General David Thomae, Commander 2nd Division
- Veterans, service personnel and their families

May we pause to give our thoughts to the people of Ukraine, who have suffered significant loss of life and destruction of property. Our thoughts are with all those caught in the conflict. We hope for a return to peace. We are fortunate to be able, in peace, to remember, with a sense of loss and gratitude, our soldiers who gave up their lives in war.

Anzac Day has been a traditional commemoration since the first anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli. In 1916, in Egypt and in Australia, soldiers and nurses gathered to remember their fallen comrades and the tradition began. As the nature of the service evolved,

Anzac Day also commemorated the lives of Australians who died in the Second World War and was subsequently expanded to include all those who lost their lives in all the military and peacekeeping operations, in which Australia has been involved.¹

There is a significant Tasmanian link to the landing at Gallipoli. The current 12th/40th Battalion, the Royal Tasmania Regiment, carries the tradition and colours of the 12th and 40th Battalions, who volunteered for service in the First World War and suffered the tragic consequences of that decision.

The 12th Battalion of the First Australian Imperial Force (AIF) was drawn substantially from Tasmania. It was raised within three weeks of the declaration of war in August 1914 and embarked on Her Majesty's Australian Transport *Geelong* to Egypt for final training and preparations.

With the 9th, 10th and 11th Battalions, it formed the 3rd Brigade. The 3rd 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, at around 4:30 am on 25 April 1915.

The 12th Battalion was involved in heavy fighting during the establishment and defence of the front line. It was the first unit to make entrenchments on a systematic and extensive scale. The construction plan for these trenches stood the test on the night of a heavy bombardment from Turkish batteries on 20th of May 1915. While the battalions on the right and left suffered very severely, the Tasmanians only had 12 casualties. For some 11 weeks after, a slow forward movement was carried out by means of tunnels. Men worked continuously on the tunnels for 24 hours a day without cessation.²

To keep the Turks on the watch and prevent them detaching reinforcements to oppose a British advance from another part of the Peninsula, "an ingenious ruse" was adopted to deceive the Turks 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, where they entered the lower trenches. They then returned using the underground tunnels to their original positions. They kept repeating this "ingenious" manoeuvre. The Turks believed a large force was building up in these lower trenches and bombarded them, but our Tasmanians were safely back in the upper trenches.

¹ <https://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/anzac-day/traditions> accessed 25 Feb 22

² 'Tasmania's War Record 1914-1918' L. Broinowski (Ed) 1921 Gov of Tasmania p14.

The Tasmanian trench system was recognised as the most effective and best devised on Gallipoli.³ The success of the ruse must be balanced against the horrors of the Gallipoli campaign.

We can get a glimpse of such horror from an extract of a letter back home from Tasmanian, Harold Craig, which reads, “the country was so rough and scrubby that you couldn’t see where you were going... the bullets were cutting the leaves off...the shrapnel was worse than hell...then I got up to the firing line. I was lying next to a Major who was shot in both legs. It was awful hearing the wounded crying out and seeing the dead lying around you. Well after a while a bullet hit me, and just grazed my wrist enough to burn the skin. I didn’t take any notice of that, but about five minutes after one got me clean through the arm...”

This letter was written from his hospital bed on 18 May 1915. Harold Craig was sent back to Gallipoli where he was severely wounded by an exploding bomb on 7 August. He died the next day on the hospital ship *Dunluce Castle* and was buried at sea.⁴

The 12th Battalion continued to serve at ANZAC until the evacuation of allied forces in December.⁵ But they endured appalling conditions through June, July, and August, with an outbreak of dysentery, a plague of flies, awful stench, hard food, lack of water and scarcity of sleep.⁶

The ANZAC landing and subsequent occupation of Gallipoli was the first experience for our young Nation of the human cost of a major commitment of Australian soldiers.

8,141 were killed. Over 26,000 were casualties.⁷ The campaign was a military failure. Nevertheless, the ANZACS displayed bravery, ingenuity, endurance, loyalty to mates and sacrifice, ordinary people having done extraordinary things in the adversity of the battlefield. There are many stories of conspicuous acts of gallantry, bravery and sacrifice. Their bravery is exemplified by the fact that nine of the 64 Victoria Crosses awarded to Australians in WWI⁸ were won during the Gallipoli campaign.⁹

The First World War went on to become Australia’s costliest conflict in deaths and casualties. From a population of fewer than five million, over 416,000 men enlisted, more

³ ‘Tasmania’s War Record 1914-1918’ L. Broinowski (Ed) 1921 Gov of Tasmania p14.

⁴ Extract from Harold Craig’s Letters to Home, Penguin History Museum.

⁵ <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/U51452#:~:text=Lieutenant%20Colonel%20L.%20F.,the%20attack%20on%20Lone%20Pine>. Accessed 21 Feb 22

⁶ ‘Tasmania’s War Record 1914-1918’ L. Broinowski (Ed) 1921 Gov of Tasmania p15.

⁷ <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/gallipoli#:~:text=The%20whole%20Gallipoli%20operation%2C%20however,the%20course%20of%20the%20war>. accessed 25 Feb 22

⁸ <https://www.pmc.gov.au/government/its-honour/victoria-cross> accessed 1 Apr 22

⁹ Our Heroes - Tasmania’s Victoria Cross Recipients. Barnett, G. Foot & Playsted, Launceston 2015 p21

than 60,000 were killed and 156,000 wounded, gassed, or taken prisoner.¹⁰ Over 15,000 Tasmanians enlisted; 2,432 died. Included in that number were 21 Tasmanian Aboriginal men from Cape Barren Island, who enlisted and served at Gallipoli, in Flanders, and on the Somme. Six of those men were killed.¹¹

They all volunteered to serve and were from different backgrounds and walks of life. Many were immigrants. Most were young. This loss of life was tragic. The many who returned to Tasmania and Australia, were damaged physically and/or psychologically in some way.¹² A huge toll on our Nation and on our communities.

On this Anzac Day, our focus is on the bravery of our Australian men and women. We do not seek to glorify or celebrate war. We affirm our desire and commitment for conflicts in the international arena to be solved diplomatically and peacefully. We strive to avoid armed conflict whenever possible.

Let us honour and remember our fallen servicemen and women, including nurses and support staff, who paid the ultimate price for their service on behalf of our Nation.

Let us remember all our Australian and Tasmanian sailors, soldiers and aviators. They have been at the forefront of the defence of our democratic way of life for over a century.

We salute their service and devotion.

On behalf of a grateful Nation, we thank all who have served, who currently serve and all who support them.

Lest we forget.

¹⁰ <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/atwar/first-world-war> accessed 25 Feb 22

¹¹ https://www.centenaryofanzac.tas.gov.au/history/tasmanian_aboriginal_soldiers accessed 25 Feb 22

¹² <https://165anzacs.org/background-world-war-1> citing Herring,P.(2016) World War I. Downloaded from http://www.utas.edu.au/library/companion_to_tasmanian_history/F/First%20World%20War.html