

# Anzac Day Address

*An address to the ANZAC Day Service, Templestowe, April 25, 2017*

*- check against delivery -*

On this day, we pause and quietly reflect on those who have served this nation in war and in peace, particularly those who paid the ultimate sacrifice of giving their lives in the hope of a free and more just world.

As we gather in the stillness of the morning, we recall those brave and courageous Anzacs that stormed the Gallipoli Peninsula 102 year ago. As they came ashore, the beat of their hearts matched the pace of their boots; Australians and New Zealanders - together in that place for the first time. Together they died in their thousands. There were families across two continents - from as far apart as Wellington and Perth - and those whose names appear on this Memorial - who fare welled loved ones from home, never to be seen again.

More than twenty million people – almost the population of Australia - were killed or maimed in the Great War. Forty-two young men from Templestowe, then a rural, farming region on the outskirts of Melbourne went to the Great War. Thirteen of those local young men never returned. They lie in the gullies of Gallipoli, or in Flanders Fields, or some unknown places.

As the historian Geoffrey Blainey wrote in his *Short History of the World*: "From crowded apartments in Moscow to sheep farms in New Zealand there were millions of mantelpieces on which stood framed black-and-white photographs of earnest or smiling young men, killed in the war which everyone now called the Great War, not realising that a greater war was barely 20 years ahead."

That war – World War II - now 75 years ago saw bombs reign on Darwin; enemy submarines enter Sydney Harbour, and a great battle in the seas and on the lands to our north. In the decades since, Australians have fought elsewhere - in Malaya, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan amongst other places. Indeed, the conflict in Afghanistan has been the longest we have been engaged, some 15 years now, involving nearly 40,000 of our Defence personnel.

This is not celebration; it is a commemoration. War is horrific; it is a last resort, but there are occasions when justice, peace and liberty can only be preserved by standing up to totalitarianism and evil.

Let us reflect: on the defence force personnel, in the past and today, who answer the call to protect our nation; Let us remember those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice with their lives in the hope that peace and security will prevail; and Let us rededicate ourselves to the care of those who suffer the injuries and illness of conflict.

Lest we forget.