

Rede des Neuseeländischen Botschafters S.E. Alan Cook:

ANZAC DAY 2008

Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.

Excellencies, colleagues and friends, ladies and gentlemen

While it was night in Europe people gathered in their thousands in towns and cities around New Zealand and Australia to commemorate the dawning of another Anzac Day.

Just a few hours ago crowds gathered once again to mark this event at Anzac Cove on the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey.

Now here in Berlin we join with people all around the world in remembering those who sacrificed their lives in time of war.

It is now ninety-three years since members of the newly formed Australia and New Zealand Army Corps landed on the beaches at Gallipoli.

Everything went wrong. They were landed at the wrong place, the resistance was fiercer than expected, and the broken terrain made coordination impossible.

It was a soldier's battle. One New Zealander wrote with admiration of the Australian effort "No orders, no proper military "team work", no instructions. Just absolute heroism."

At the end of that long day, the Anzacs were digging in and holding on. And they held on for eight months, as the brutal campaign swayed backwards and forwards, through moments when victory seemed almost in reach, through despair at lost opportunities, through ever-present disease, through appalling casualties.

When the expeditionary force finally withdrew, of the 8556 New Zealanders who served in the campaign, 2515 had been killed. 8709 Australians were killed. Altogether both the Allies and the Turks lost over 250,000 men each.

The very first Anzac Day was held in 1916, as soldiers gathered to remember their mates who had fallen.

They celebrated comradeship. Endurance. Survival.

They did not think of themselves as heroes, but others did. Colonel William Malone, who was killed along with most of the Wellington Regiment in the assault on Chunuk Bair in August 1915, wrote: "The world never saw better men or braver".

As time passed, the memory of Gallipoli also came to be seen as a defining moment in the history of two young countries.

It marked a point at which New Zealanders and Australians began to recognise their own identity and to feel they had a unique role to play in the world.

And over time, Anzac Day came to stand for something else. Reconciliation.

Some of the most inspirational words about the Gallipoli campaign were spoken by Mustafa Kemal Attaturk. His words of compassion and humanity towards former foes speak to us across the years.

It is entirely proper that these words form part of our ceremony today, just as they are engraved not only at Gallipoli but also on a monument in Wellington that overlooks a rugged coastline not very different from that which confronted the Anzacs when they landed.

There have been other wars since then. New Zealand and Australian soldiers, sailors and aircrew have found themselves caught up in conflicts not of their making, and battlefields far away. These were ordinary people who were asked to do extraordinary things for their country.

Even today, New Zealanders and Australians are serving overseas. We are in Afghanistan, alongside troops from Turkey and Germany and many other countries, trying to bring peace and reconstruction to the people of that war-torn land. We stand together in Timor Leste and in Solomon Islands and in other peacekeeping operations.

In New Zealand and Australia, the old soldiers have gradually faded away, but their children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren still march with pride on Anzac Day.

We stand here in Berlin united with all those back home and with New Zealanders and Australians wherever they are gathered in the world. We salute the sacrifices of those who died in the service of their country and our armed forces who continue to serve with the same dedication in the cause of peace today.

Thank you for sharing this special occasion with us – *vielen dank, tessukar ederiz, tena koutou katoa.*