

## Acknowledgements

Governor-General of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea  
**His Excellency Grand Chief Sir Michael Ogio**

Prime Minister of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea  
**The Honourable Peter O'Neill**

Deputy Prime Minister of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea  
**The Honourable Leo Dion**

The High Commissioner for Australia  
**Her Excellency Ms Deborah Stokes**

Acting High Commissioner for New Zealand  
**Ms Nicci Stilwell**

Commander of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force  
**Brigadier General Gilbert Toropo**

**Members of the Diplomatic corps**

**Distinguished guests**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Many people from Townsville have attended this service over time. They all tell a similar story of how this place feels, looks, and sounds. I am very pleased to say that for once, the rhetoric of North Queenslanders has not been overstated. This is a magical setting and a truly beautiful service. I thank you so very much for allowing me to attend.

We come here today to pay tribute to those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice so that we, who are left, can in fact grow old and be safe. But ANZAC Day is much more than that. Today, ANZAC Day represents to me what it is to be an Australian. It represents to each of us what it is to be part of a collective, to belong to a greater part of our community.

We are coming into a period of great commemoration. This year marks 100 years since the commencement of hostilities in the War to end all Wars. 2015 will be the official ANZAC Centenary. 2016 will see the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration of the Battle of Long Tan. We will continue with many important events until November 11, 2018 which will mark the centenary of the signing of the Armistice to officially end World War 1.

Since the Crimean War, Australians, have seen hostilities across the world in many countries and fields of battle. The one common denominator being the loss of life, too young, too soon.

Today we pay our respects to all who have fallen in fields of battle across the world. We also come to honour those who wear a uniform in their nation's defense. We take the time to thank you for your service, for going to places we may not wish to see, all in the name of keeping us safe.

As we look out across the white head stones of the men and the woman before us, we also pray that those who serve today will return safely and go on to live healthy, happy, fulfilling lives. I do not have a military background. I have never served. I have never had to ask myself the question "Will I be brave"? That is the part of ANZAC Day which always comes to me during periods of reflection. To think that the great majority of those people who fought in the first and Second World Wars were basically ordinary people who were in a situation which would be described as anything but ordinary.

I was a small boy in Grade three at Texas State School in South West Queensland when we learned about Corporal John French. It was only a few weeks ago that I was here for the first time, with my Prime Minister, Tony Abbott. We stopped in front of Corporal John French's head stone. My Grade Three education kicked in immediately. I was whisked back to 1968 and hearing about a bloke from up the road at Crow's Nest going in to battle and single handedly taking out 3 machine gun nests. He gave his life for the safety of others. He was brave; there can be no doubt about that. But, anyone there on that day was brave.

In Grade three, the jungles and fighting of Corporal John French and the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels seemed like it was a million miles away from rural Queensland. And yet, when I am here, I suddenly realize just how close Papua New Guinea is to Australia and what brave deeds were done to keep us safe.

We live in a different kind of world now, and we fight different kinds of wars. But the common denominator will always be young men and women, in uniform, a long way from home.

We, be it Governments or citizens, must never forget that war and conflict is never romantic. It is never the Boy's Own Annual experience. We must always be prepared to assist those who come home wounded. Not just the obvious scars of broken or lost limbs. We must be prepared to assist those who come home wounded within. We must be prepared, as a society, to try and comprehend what these people have been through and that these wounds need healing, just like all wounds need time and attention.

To the people of Papua New Guinea, I say thank you for being our friend. Thank you for allowing us to be part of your collective, to belong to a greater part of your community. What your country's people did for us will never be forgotten. You are, indeed, a great friend.

To those who have gone before, we salute you. To those who continue to serve, we say thank you for your service and salute you. On this ANZAC Day, and for ever after, we shall remember you.

Lest we forget.

