

Jordy McCarthy – 2018 ANZAC Dawn Service Address

Courage...Endurance....Mateship.....Sacrifice.....four words that mean so much to many Australians and form the qualities we know as the ANZAC legend. A spirit that was forged amidst the devastation on the shores of Gallipoli and on the Western Front during WW1.

These qualities.... Courage...Endurance...Mateship and Sacrifice epitomise the way our soldiers fought for our freedom during WW1, but also the way they fought throughout every battle our Australian troops have been involved in.

In September 2017 I was lucky enough to witness the power of this spirit. As I climbed out of Deniki, emerging from the jungle of Papua New Guinea and into the clearing of the Isuarava Battle site along the Kokoda Trail, I was confronted by these words, etched onto 4 granite pillars, standing tall over the Owen-Stanley ranges. As a 17 year old in my final year of schooling, I have never been so moved by four simple words, and at that moment I truly understood the weight of their significance and felt an undeniable connection to our Australian diggers.

We have so much to learn from the ANZACs, who faced impossible odds as they tumbled out of boats and toward certain death, bombarded with bullets from the Turkish cliffs above. However despite this desperate and hopeless situation they did not run, they did not give up, they did not refuse to fight – they gathered their courage and resilience and showed what it meant to be an ANZAC. They stood together and fought side by side so the country they loved could enjoy the freedom that we have today

For us to truly honour the sacrifice made by our Australian soldiers, and to ensure that they did not die in vain, we, the next generation, need to embrace the qualities of the ANZAC that are – courage, endurance, mateship and sacrifice.

Ultimately, our words mean nothing. So, it is in our actions and the way we choose to live our lives that we can truly show our gratitude to those who have died in all conflicts, battles and peacekeeping missions around the world.

And so.... as I stood upon the hallowed ground at the Isurava battlefield, I vowed to remember the sacrifices made by our soldiers and live by the 4 words that forged the ANZAC spirit, by being kind to all, showing gratitude, helping others and being the best person I can be. That is how we, how I, can honour our fallen soldiers, and work towards building a peaceful world.

Spencer Levesque – 2018 ANZAC Dawn Service Address

ANZAC day means many things to many people. For some it is a public holiday, for others it is about the Pies V Bombers, for others it is marching for their school. However, Anzac Day is one of Australia's most important national occasions and the anniversary of the first major military action fought by the Australian and New Zealand forces during the First World War, which established our reputation among the nations of the world. It is a day of mixed emotions as we remember and realise what these young men and women sacrificed for their country.

As I searched for the true meaning of ANZAC day for me, I thought about how it makes me feel. And amongst the wave of emotions I feel on Anzac Day one really stood out. It's the same feeling you get when the Aussies take out a gold medal in the Commonwealth Games or when you achieve a goal you worked so hard to conquer. It makes me feel proud, proud to be called an Australian.

I feel the same way when I go to the Dawn Service or when I march, mainly because I get to wear my Great Grandfather's medals from the time he served in WW2. As I looked into his history deeper I discovered that he was in the 9th Division Cavalry Regiment also known as the Black Berets. It was in the early 1940's that he voluntarily enlisted in the Victorian town of Horsham. After training he was sent to Syria and Egypt as a wireless operator in a Bren Gun Carrier where they predominantly fought the Germans. From the stories that have been passed on to me from my Grandpa and Uncle about my great grandfather, he never spoke about the gory side of war. Rather he talked about the good and fun times he shared with his mates. All of these stories had a common theme – mateship. Instead of running for the hills when something went pear shaped they stuck by each other, fighting together and helping one another out. After hearing these stories and learning more about my Great Grandfather, that same feeling of pride resurfaced.

So why does Anzac Day and these stories make me feel proud? It is because of the courage and compassion as well as the sacrifices made by so many Anzacs, fighting for our country and our freedom and making Australia what it is today. I cannot comprehend, and I hope I never have to understand, what it would be like to be surrounded by gunfire and violence or having to watch my mates die in front of me. It is because of these brave men and women that I can stand before you, from a position of privilege and comfort, and speak about my deep feelings and the true meaning of Anzac Day for me.

And so, as the sun rises this morning, consider what Anzac Day means to you and hopefully, like me, you will feel a deeper level of respect for those brave men and women who will always be remembered.