

**We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.**

**Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.**

**And now the torch and poppy red
Wear in honour of our dead
Fear not that ye have died for naught
We've learned the lesson that ye taught
In Flanders' Fields.**

Lest We Forget.



A Message from Mark!
Anzac Remembrance

**23 April 2010
Scripture ~ John 15:12-17**

ANZAC Day goes beyond the anniversary of the landing on Gallipoli in 1915. It is the day we remember all Australians who served and died in all wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations. The spirit of ANZAC, with its human qualities of courage, mateship, and sacrifice, continues to have meaning and relevance for our sense of national identity. On ANZAC day and in the days leading up to it, ceremonies are held in towns and cities across our nation to acknowledge the service of our veterans. So, we find ourselves gathered here today as part of just one of many many such services. It is good to be with you.

I only became part of the Australian Defence Force as a Chaplain or 'Padre' in June last year; quite recently in the long Anzac history! In quite recent years, our service personnel have deployed into numerous locations, ten Australian soldiers have died in Afghanistan, the first Victoria Cross since Vietnam has been awarded to an Australian, nine Australians died in Indonesia whilst on an humanitarian mission and the operational tempo for the Australian Defence Force has never been so hectic. As a new Officer, I don't feel particularly qualified to talk to you, but I do so on behalf of my colleagues who are serving in numerous overseas situations.

In the English city of Coventry stands a magnificent cathedral; two cathedrals really because the old is joined to the new. Coventry Cathedral was demolished by incendiary bombs at the height of WWII and a new one built adjacent to the ruins to replace it.

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Both are places of extreme beauty and I was moved to tears as I walked around there about 10 years ago. In the new Cathedral is a Chapel of Industry, very apt because Coventry is an industrial city: it is round and the altar is also round. On the floor around the altar are inscribed the words: *I stand among you as one who also serves.*

Today I, too, stand among you as one who also serves, not in combat but as a pastoral helper. I represent the contemporary Defence Force, a force where Regulars and Reservists train and serve on deployment side by side, a force where Reservists have also died on duty, a force where women serve on the front line, a force where the ideals of ANZAC are still perpetuated, a force where the ideals of courage, initiative, resourcefulness and teamwork are intertwined with professionalism, humour, commitment and dedication.

Many have had multiple deployments. Most of these people are young, far younger than I am, all have volunteered to serve overseas and all are proud of the Australian flag on their uniform. These people inherited the ANZAC tradition and they work to uphold the same ideals. They are proud and you should be proud of them, too.

The ANZAC tradition is a contradiction in many respects: a disaster that turned into a triumph, poor generalship yet brilliant leadership, especially at unit level, shocking conditions but inspirational resourcefulness, limited facilities yet limitless endurance, abject privation yet utmost professionalism, boundless enthusiasm despite inevitable death or injury, horrific battles and indomitable courage.

These men were heroes, they wrote their names in blood and they established an Australian tradition that knows no limits. Their legacy was never anticipated but their courage, bravery and spirit continue to inspire nearly a century after the world was introduced to the concept of the volunteer soldier.

Our critics claim that we glorify war. Nothing could be further from the truth. War must never be glorified.

Today we honour men and women who served, the ideals that inspired them, their deeds that inspired us and their accomplishments that have given us a tomorrow that was denied them. Most importantly, we pledge anew that their sacrifice, like that of Christ our Lord, was not in vain, that we will work to avoid further war and promote the betterment of humankind.

No-one questions the legacy that these men bequeathed to us, no-one questions that they were heroes, no-one disputes the attributes that they displayed almost as a national characteristic, but how many of us merit their legacy? How many of us strive to ensure the perpetuity of their traditions, how many safeguard all that they held precious to ensure that our country in peace reflects the dream that they surrendered in war?

I think it is profoundly satisfying that the Australian Defence Force now has more personnel serving in peace-keeping roles than it has in combat. We are using our military skills to bring peace to those whose communities have been disrupted by lawlessness.

The perils are not dissimilar to those faced in combat, the rewards are different but the idealism is identical. My short experience has taught me already that courage, initiative and teamwork are still required, that humour and goodwill are still essential to overcome the failings of the bureaucracy and that the friendships forged in adversity are richer, deeper and more satisfying than the superficialities often seen at home.

Most importantly, those who choose to wear the Australian uniform are proud of their Service, their country and the opportunities given to them to serve. They are aware that they walk in the shadow of the ANZACs and they consciously strive to merit the same respect that our ancestors earned in time of war.

May I finish with the words of a Canadian Medical Officer from WWI who wrote more eloquently than can I?