

## **CN Speech For Kaba Tepe Simulation Centre – 21 April 2015**

I am most honoured to be here in this excellent Simulation Centre to assist with the unveiling of the HMAS AE2 Commemorative Plaque. I acknowledge and thank the Governor of Canakkale Province for his support in hosting the plaque at Kaba Tepe. I thank the Director and staff of the centre for making this possible.

It is most appropriate that AE2's plaque should be placed here to remind all visitors that the events of 1915 on this peninsula started as a maritime operation and the campaign was sustained by both sides across water. The Anzacs came from Alexandria and those that survived the campaign returned there. The Sea of Marmara was the most direct way for the Turkish army on Gallipoli to be sustained and reinforced.

Of course the Anzacs came from far further away than Egypt. Last October I watched as an Australian and a New Zealand frigate sailed through the Kemal Attaturk channel into the port of Albany in the extreme south west corner of Australia. The Prime Ministers of both countries were there to commemorate the centenary of the departure of the first ANZAC convoy in 1914.

In a reciprocal agreement in 1985 the channel leading into Princess Royal Harbour, Albany, was officially named Ataturk Channel while the Turkish Government named the landing beach at Gallipoli "Anzac Cove". In 2002 a statue of Mustafa Kamal Ataturk was erected overlooking the channel which bears his name. He has his hand raised in a gesture of

greeting and farewell. A new National Anzac Centre was opened last year overlooking the channel. It tells the stories of a representation of the men and women who went to war in the ships that left Albany in 1914. It is in many ways the counterpart to this Centre.

Thirty five troop transport ships departed with naval escorts from Albany to cross the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea and enter the Mediterranean. The troops believed they were going to winter in England and then into France to fight in the trenches. No one knew that their final destination would be here at Kaba Tepe and Anzac Cove washed by the blue Aegean. Not one man in a thousand on board would have known where the Gallipoli peninsula was.

A few weeks after the first convoy sailed *AE2* left from Albany with the second convoy. Earlier in 1914 her Captain, Lieutenant Commander Stoker found himself without a role for his submarine in the South Pacific. So he ignored his chain of command and went straight to the Minister of Defence to ask for permission to take his *AE2* back to Europe to where he could find suitable targets. The Minister approved the request and told the Navy to make it happen. As a Chief of Navy I applaud Stoker's initiative but not his methods of communication!

We are here to unveil this *AE2* commemorative plaque because Stoker was a man of great determination who took his submarine where none had been before; through the Dardanelles and into the Sea of Marmara. He opened the strait for those Royal Navy submariners who followed where he and his Australians had gone.

Stoker and his men survived their brief encounter with the Turkish Navy because Captain Riza of *Sultanhisar* was a man of honour who saw that sailors cease to be enemies when their ship is sinking and they are in peril of their lives. This conduct does him and his men great credit and Australians will always be grateful for his compassion and professionalism.

Gallipoli has seen more than two thousand years of maritime history. Piri Reis, the great Ottoman admiral, geographer, cartographer was born here in the 1460's. During his long and adventurous life he mapped and fought in the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean and significantly expanded the Ottoman Empire. His charts of the Mediterranean and the New World were skilful compilations based on the works of the ancients and of Columbus. He was that rare naval officer; a fighting sailor who was also a mapmaker. No doubt his training as a young man in these waters taught him his seamanship and laid the basis for his later career. I note that in 1553 when he was approaching ninety he turned down a final mission against the Portuguese and was executed. Perhaps there is a lesson to be learned from Piri Reis's fate for all disobedient admirals in the modern era!

The discovery, exploration and protection of Stoker's submarine has written a new and much happier page in the naval history of Turkey and Australia. It has been a joint operation which has depended on the skills and determination of Australian and Turkish divers, maritime archaeologists and former submariners in equal measure. It has now

been brought to a successful conclusion after sixteen years of joint endeavour. *AE2* will continue for generations to come to be a protected site. The decades long mystery of where she lies is solved. Her final role has been to bring together the professional descendants of the men of two navies who were foes in 1915 and are now bound together by the warmest bonds of mutual respect and friendship.

Thank you.