

AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL HONG KONG

ANZAC DAY SERVICE 25 APRIL 2014

SPEECH BY VADM RAY GRIGGS

CHIEF OF NAVY AUSTRALIA

Thank you for the opportunity and the honour of being able to speak this morning on this most special of days for all Australians and New Zealanders, wherever they are in the world. It is a great honour to be here at the school particularly in front of this beautiful Anzac Memorial.

On the surface, this day is about us stopping to think about the sacrifice of those who have fought and died for our countries. Nearly every country has a day when it stops to remember those who have fought to defend their land; this is the day when Australians and New Zealanders do so.

This is something we must do so that we do not allow ourselves to forget the terrible cost of securing the freedom that we take for granted today. It is hard today to think of these sacrifices, to think of others, many of whom were no older than those of you in Year 12, who were prepared to give everything to defend their country and the freedom of their families.

While Gallipoli is often the focus today, we must guard against thinking today is all about Gallipoli. The temptation to do that increases as the centenary of the landings at Anzac Cove approach, as important a moment as it was. We of course had been at war for eight months by this day 99 years ago: we had successfully secured German possessions in New Guinea which helped secure our trade in the Pacific; our fledgling navy had fought and won its first sea battle when the cruiser *Sydney* sought out, engaged and sank the German cruiser *Emden* near the Cocos Islands. Close by was the first convoy of Anzac troops going to Europe; *Emden* was a dangerous threat to these troops, troops that would eventually conduct the Gallipoli landings. And since that first great world war we have seen losses around the world including the 50 Anzac soldiers lost in Afghanistan.

Today is not a day that glorifies war nor should it be a day that glorifies our own military traditions. It is more rightly a day of deep reflection, a chance to think about sacrifice made and why.

It's a day of great sadness and yet one of justifiable pride; pride in the courage and sacrifice that hundreds and thousands of ordinary men and women have made over more than a century in the service of our countries.

It is also very much about who we are as two peoples: two young nations that were prepared to contribute, and continue to contribute, to the peace and security of our world; two young nations who shouldered their share of a common burden; and two young nations that developed an unshakeable bond.

It's is not all about us though. It is as much about remembering and commemorating those who have fought alongside us - the British, the French, the Canadians, Americans and the Koreans to name just a few. And just as importantly, we need to think about those who fought against us, for they too

were ordinary men and women who were fighting for a cause they believed in.

If you look at the relationship that Australians and New Zealanders have with the Turks you can see that after brutal conflict great respect and friendship can grow. If you ever get to go to Gallipoli you will be amazed by the way the Turkish people look after Australians and New Zealanders.

So Anzac Day leads us to look back, to look back with some pride at our shared history, at the sacrifice and courage of those who have gone before us but if we are to really understand Anzac Day it also is a day for us to look forward. We need to take the very best from the Anzacs of the past – their spirit, their courage, their determination and their mate ship – and build on it to make our societies better places to live because that is what they would have wanted. Lest we forget.