

2025 Kranji ANZAC Dawn Service Address: 25 April 2025

Allaster Cox, Australian High Commissioner to Singapore

110 years ago on this day, at this time, troops of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps landed on the shores of the Gallipoli Peninsula in modern day Türkiye.

For the Australians it was a nationally unifying experience as soldiers from the 6 separate colonies which had formed our Federation in 1901 came together in a new national force created before the landing.

From this first dawn and for the next 8 months the ANZACs fought valiantly against overwhelming odds until they were evacuated in December. Of the 75,000 ANZACs who served on the Peninsula over that time, more than 12,000 were killed and 22,000 injured. And so was borne a shared legend of unity, sacrifice, mateship and resilience.

The Gallipoli landing came 9 months into a World War which had erupted as the intense rivalries of the Great Powers of Europe exploded in a crescendo of armed mobilisations ignited by a single act of political assassination.

The established order which had evolved and shifted during the 19th century since 1815 had finally and irrevocably collapsed.

For the next 30 years until 1945 the world was plunged into an era of war, revenge, revolution, depression and ideological frenzy which ended in genocide, annihilation and the destruction of nations and peoples.

Around 100 million people died in two World Wars including more than 50,000 here in Singapore alone. At this memorial cemetery 24 000 Commonwealth war dead mainly from the Second World War - including more than 1600 Australian and New Zealanders - are interred and remembered.

Today - 80 years since the end of that second war- we gather here in a new period of global transition and uncertainty – where the existing order established over those last 8 decades is breaking down - seemingly now at an accelerating and unsettling pace.

These 80 years have not been without their challenges, their hot, cold and proxy conflicts and their inequities, but a central balance has been maintained, the use of weapons capable of mass annihilation avoided and rules of exchange and commerce created which have lifted millions from poverty and engendered the greatest prosperity the world has ever known.

It gave rise to the decolonisation and emergence of new nations in Asia, Africa and beyond including an independent Singapore born 60 years ago this August: a country - which from very difficult beginnings is now -through leadership and foresight – one of the most prosperous on earth.

We all have much to lose if the age of transition in which we now live descends into the chaos, disorder and war which befell the world from 1914 to 1945.

This ceremony – every year – on this morning – is to remember and honour the sacrifice and resilience of our peoples facing terrible events – the tragedy of war.

We must all commit in our hearts, minds and actions, profoundly to remember that tragedy, to honour that sacrifice and reaffirm that it must never be repeated.

Lest we forget.



