

2013 ANZAC DAY AT SPARTA PLACE

On Sunday 21 April 2013, a group of Peloponnesians gathered together at the foot of King Leonidas statue located at Sparta Place, Brunswick, City of Moreland; to commemorate those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for freedom.



(Left to right) Mr. & Mrs Jack Galanis (President Argolida) Sam Mihelakos (Past President Laconians) Sgt Ken (Kyryiakos) Tsigotis (Veteran) 8/7th Battalion the Royal Victoria Regiment, Mr Peter Athanasakis (Past President Laconians), Mr. John Panos (Committee), Mr. Jim Kanellakos (Past President Laconians), King Leonidas, Mr. Con Glekas (Veteran), Chris Paikopoulos (President Pallaconian Brotherhood), Mr. Jim Bakis (Committee), Jenny Krasopoulaki, (President Peloponnesian Youth) Mr Dimitrios Alexopoulos (President of Arcadians) and Mr. Peter Adamis (Veteran)

Amidst a small crowd which included the occasional passersby, a small group that had gathered together from various parts of the Peloponnese to pay homage to those who died at Thermopylae in Greece and Papua New Guinea. It was a typical Laconian affair, devoid of brass bands, marching soldiers, loud and noisy crowds. The gathering headed by the Chris Paikopoulos, President of the Pallaconians had come together to remember those who had fallen in battle and ultimately paid the supreme sacrifice. At that ancient battle at Thermopylae, a small contingent of Greeks headed by King Leonidas delayed aggressor intent of enslaving the Hellenic nation. This battle was emulated by their brother in arms, the Australians some 2000 years later, fighting a similar aggressor at the same location during WW2.

Sgt Ken (Kyryiakos) Tsigotis of Laconian origins and a veteran of East Timor and Afghanistan read the ode: **"they shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old, age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn, at the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them, lest we forget"**. Sgt Tsigotis represented the 8/7th Battalion the Royal Victoria Regiment, of which elements of the battalion had fought during the battles of Greece and Crete in WW2.

Present were also, Con Glekas who gave the **ANZAC prayer** followed by Peter Adamis who spoke of Simonides the poet of Ceos epitaph: **"stranger, go tell the men of Lacedaemon that we, who lie here, did as we were ordered"**. Messrs Glekas and Adamis, both Australian ex servicemen had attended the simple ceremony to remember those Australians who delayed a determined enemy on the doorstep of Australia's Northern shores on the Kokoda track (Papua New Guinea). During WW2 it was defining moment in Australia's military history and its own Thermopylae.



(Left to right) Mr. Jim Kanellakos (Past President Laconians), Sgt Ken (Kyriakos) Tsirigotis (Veteran) 8/7th Battalion the Royal Victoria Regiment, King Leonidas, Chris Paikopoulos (President Pallaconian Brotherhood) and Mr. Con Glekas (Veteran)

ANZAC Day address. Chris Paikopoulos during his Annual ANZAC Day address said that “we stand here today to remember the fallen and to remind us and the world the significance of what this statue of King Leonidas truly stands for.” He went onto say that “for the strangers and passersby’s it may appear to be just a hunk of bronze and could be forgiven for not knowing its significance”.

He said that “it symbolizes a freedom from oppression, freedom to live as we choose and a permanent symbol of hope for future generations not only in this country we call home Australia, but also for all the other nations of the free world. It was also a reminder that that we here today are the generation of parents who came from a land we call Hellas. Hellas, being the home of our ancestors and of generations who also paid the ultimate sacrifice for freedom. Our parents and grandparents who made this journey to Australia and made it home, we who are your witnesses pay homage also to your courage and tenacity”.

Chris Paikopoulos paid tribute to those who fought and died at Thermopylae in Greece and reminded the gathering of memes and veterans alike that the statue of King Leonidas also represented those Australians who had fought and died on the Kokoda track at Papua New Guinea, Australia’s Thermopylae. He finished by saying that, *“We who stand here today are witness to your heroism and salute you”*. At the cessation of the ceremony, they made their way back to the Pallaconian Brotherhood, where some 250 Peloponnesians had gathered to meet them for light refreshments. **Peter Adamis**