



IS THE SHRINE A SYMBOL OF MANKINDS SACRIFICE - FREEDOM OR A PARTHENON?

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FREEDOM COMES AT A PRICE. "O Stranger, whoever you may be and where ever you may have come from. We know, you will, one day come. Let it be known that upon this land, all memories of a bygone era meet together as companions. Do not therefore begrudge us this small plot of earth that represents those who gave their all. Return back home a friend. Tell your people of us and of the memories we embrace" Lest we forget.

“Ω ξένε, όποιος κι αν είσαι, απ’ όπου κι αν έχεις έρθει. Γνωρίζουμε, πως κάποια μέρα θα έρθεις. Ας γίνει γνωστό, ότι σε αυτό τον τόπο, όλες οι αναμνήσεις μιας περασμένης εποχής, συναντιούνται σαν γνώριμοι. Επομένως, μην δείχνετε μνησικακία για αυτό το μικρό σημείο της γης, που αντιπροσωπεύει εκείνους, οι οποίοι έδωσαν τα πάντα. Επέστρεψε πίσω ως φίλος. Πες στους δικούς σου για εμάς και για τις αναμνήσεις που αγκαλιάζουμε.” ΔΕΝ ΞΕΧΝΩ

KIWI WAR CRY. Kia mate a ururoa Kaua hei mate a tarakihi. Fight like the Ururoa, fight to the death".

I have written this article as a result of the Shrine Trustees decision to ban Aussie Greeks parading within the Shrine grounds on the Greek war of Independence. This is my point of view. I understand that not everyone will agree with me and yet, I feel strongly about it.

The Shrine in Melbourne means much to me as it does to many other Australians. Even more so to Australians who have this great country of ours their own. Whenever I visit, read, chat about or drive past it, I do not dwell on the negative aspects of war, battles, destruction, misery, death. Being the eternal optimist, I am immediately overwhelmed by thoughts of compassion, mateship, love, courage, family, ANZACS, dreams, freedom, memories, respect, bravery, sacrifice, destiny, joy, laughter, sadness and mankind.

Despite what people may believe, the Shrine is not hallowed ground nor is it meant to be a place where restrictions are enforced. Nor is the Shrine a barrier to people expressing their love of freedom from those intent on remembering the ultimate sacrifices made by mankind. As an Australian veteran born in a village (Pellana, Sparta, Laconia Greece) known for its warrior values of a bygone era; I take umbrage at those who believe that the Shrine is only for those who fought for Australia alone.

There are many Australians and New Zealanders who lie buried in military cemeteries in Greece. Each one of these cemeteries are carefully looked after and veterans and loved ones who visit know that their kin are sleeping undisturbed and loved greatly by the Greek people. The Shrine to me is always a reminder that freedom comes at a price and that the Shrine is a symbol for freedom from tyrannical forces. As a Greek born lad who was raised in Australia and embraced Australian values, does not mean that I follow blindly the will of others who have a skewed idea of what the Shrine stands for.

I can understand the emotions that the Shrine can evoke, such personal emotions that will choke a person and bring them to tears. This is more so for those who have lost sons, uncles, brothers, fathers and grandfathers to war. They have the right to feel emotional and that Shrine represents the lives lost on some distant battlefield.

Today, we the people are subjected to misinformation, fake news, vile gossip, misrepresentations and political dogma that we fail to see the reasons why we become unreasonable to the plight of others. There are millions (yes millions) of Australians who arrived on the shores of this great land and contributed to its prosperity way of life, economy, security, longevity, stability and democratic principles of governance.

Those Aussies of Greek background who made Australia home, did so because they wanted to escape the horrors of war and sought a better quality of life for their children. Freedom meant much to the Aussie Greeks, especially for those who arrived in Melbourne. There were pleasantly surprised and amazed that Australia had its own Shrine that resembled the Parthenon in Athens Greece. They felt that Australians had emulated the Greeks by honouring their dead.

As such the Shrine instantly became a symbol symbiotic with the Aussie Greeks love of freedom. A freedom that was borne out of great hardship, tenacity, courage and sacrifice during the Greek War of Independence. Thus, it was natural that on each day the War of Independence was commemorated that Aussie Greeks would descend upon the Shrine. Aussie veterans who fought in Greece marching proudly beside their Aussie Greek veterans and friends while their relatives looked on, watching a parade a new generation of Australians marching past the Shrine in an orderly fashion.



This year being 2022 the Shrine Trustees whoever they may be, for whatever reason made the decision to disallow the Aussie Greeks to commemorate the Greek War of Independence by parading at the Shrine. I believe that their decision for whatever reasons they gave are not valid and veterans who have paid the ultimate sacrifice would be turning in their graves.

I for one would ask the Shrine Trustees to review their decision and reconsider their decision and allow the Aussie Greeks to commemorate their War of Independence. What better way of demonstrating courage in the face of adversity.

Aussie and Greek veterans such as Bruce Ruxton, John Deighton and Keith Rossis, John Anagnostou, Spiros Korosidis, Michael Lidis and others would be turning in their graves. These men knew what the Shrine meant to the Aussie Greeks and allowed them to march proudly to the Shrine. Sadly, times have changed and those now in the halls of power make decisions detrimental to the longevity of this nation.

In 2017, a band of Australian veterans from all over Australia created a Hellenic Memorial to ANZACS in my place of birth, Pellana, Greece. They did so to pay homage to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice during the Battles of mainland Greece and on the Greek island of Crete during WW2. This year all the names of the Australian and New Zealanders who died fighting the Nazi terror will be etched onto the marbles already in place. The memorial aptly named HANZAC is a tribute to mankind who fought and died for freedom, a freedom we take for granted.

HANZAC GUARDIANS. The HANZAC Guardians from Australia and Greece are as follows: THANASIS DAVAKIS - PATRON GREECE, JIM HAMMETT - PATRON AUSTRALIA, PETER ADAMIS - CHAIRMAN, GEZA BENKE - SECRETARY, MAURICE BARWICK - TREASURER, STEFANOS SGOURDAS - MARATHON COORDINATOR, KOSTAS MIHALOPOULOS - ASSETS MANAGER, DR. AZHAR KHAN, BARRIE DANIEL, BARRY ZIEBELL, BILL CHARLTON, BILL PAPASTERGIADIS, CHRIS GLEKAS, CHRISTINE ETHEL, COLIN GOODWIN, CONRAD ADAMIS, CRAIG YOULL, DAVID ADAMIS, DENNIS GEORGE, DIMITRI MALIAROS, DIMITRI VAROUTSIOS, DONALD NORMAN (D), DOUGLAS LUIK, EDWARD BLACK, EDWARD BRYSON, ELENI VLAHOGIANNI, GABBY KIWARKIS, GARRY ADAMS, GENE PRATT, GEORGE DIMOS, GEORGÉ MANSFORD, GEORGE PARASKEVOPOULOS, DR. GEORGE VASSILOPOULOS, GIUSEPPE DE SIMONE, HELEN FINNIGAN, ILIAS KATSOS, JIM ROZAKLIS, JOE ZAPP, KALIOPI GLEKAS, KALIOPI PAPAPOSTOLOU, KEVIN HURLEY, KON GLEKAS, KOSTAS SGOURDAS, KOSTAS VLAHAKIS, LARRY ILIFFE, LEON TSONGAS, LUKE KIROPOULOS, MARCUS BASTIAAN, MARIA VAMVAKINO, MARK ADAMIS, MATTHEW ADAMIS, MAVIS TREGONNING, MICHAEL BLAXLAND, MICHAEL KROGER, MICHAEL SUKKAR, NICK BAKIS, NICK DEROS, PANAGIOTIS KARAGIANNIS, PANAGIOTIS PARASKEVOPOULOS, PANAGIOTIS SIGALOS, PAUL ADAMIS, PAUL MITCHELL, PAUL PRICKETT, PETER HATHERLEY, PETER JASONIDES, PETER KALLIAKOUDIS, PETER MERCOULIA, PETER ROBERTS, RON HILL, SAM KOSTOULIAS, SANDRA MERCER-MOORE, (D), STAVROS VALASSIS, STUART THRUPP, SUSAN ZIEBELL, TERRY KANELLOS, THANASIS RASSIAS, THEMISTOCLES PATSILIVAS, TONY KELLY, VASILIKI DIMOS, VIOLET HURLEY, WARREN PAYNE, WAYNE WHITROD, & WILLIAM ADAMIS,

As always stay strong, be vigilant, never give up and fight the good fight. Peter Adamis.