



ANZAC DAY 2022 - WATSONIA

25 April 2022

After two years of lockdown the Watsonia RSL amongst the other 500 odd Return Service Leagues across Australia commemorated ANZAC Day. The ANZAC ceremony will be commemorated throughout Australia and New Zealand, in all the major cities, hamlets, villages, communities, military bases, overseas embassies, and nations that have an association with the ANZACS.

At the Watsonia RSL in excess of a thousand people attended the Dawn Service and it was great to see people of all ages once again come together to remember what ANZC day symbolised. I always reflect on this day and in my mind the words **Respect, Reverence, Remembrance and Responsibility** always come to mind. Respect for those who wore and still the uniform of Australia and New Zealand, Reverence for those whose service allow us to continue to live in freedom, Remembrance of all those who paid the ultimate sacrifice and responsibility for those of us left behind to carry the torch of Freedom and the meaning of ANZAC Day.

The thousand people that braved the cold this morning did so to ensure that the life is what it is and as such we must not let the challenges of our life time to overwhelm us, no matter whatever the cost. I saw an old friend, a neighbour named Margaret, a long-time member of the RSL present amongst the members standing with the committee and I was very happy that she was in attendance. She had lost her husband and stepson (a navy veteran) a few years ago and now being cared by her daughters. I looked around in the dark to spot any mates from the past and was unable to recognise anyone, still despite the absence of mates, I did not feel alone as I stood alongside my 'brothers and sisters' paying our respects.

There were grandparents, fathers, mothers, uncles with their children standing silently facing the Watsonia RSL listening the words spoken by the Master of Ceremonies Vice President Bill Wyndham on behalf of the President Jeffery Mawkes. Bill did justice to the President Jeffery Mawkes who has been battling cancer for a number of years and I for one wish him well, know what it is like to experience the deadly effects of cancer. Bill later advised me that although his speech was written prior, he had adlibbed much of his speech given the presence of some many people. I for one was very pleased with the outcome.

I am of the belief that we owe it to bygone generations and to those who will tread this earth after we too have contributed to our way of life. As I get older, I find that I am unable to stand the cold and yet the brisk 14 degrees this morning did not stop me for walking across to the RSL some 75 paces from my home. A home that I purchased from the Watsonia RSL back in 1998 when I retired from the Australian Regular Army. The home is now covered and surrounded by trees and vines, giving the impression of a jungle setting. A setting that I find comfort in and know that one day I too will join my 'brothers' on that heavenly patrol.

I must admit that I was very impressed to see so many people attend and it made my heart glad to find that the ANZAC spirit was still very strong in the youth of today. I have much faith in the new generation who may appear to be distracted by technology and of the challenges they face, yet I still see that ANZAC spirit remain on fire within them. If today's presentation and representation is to be a measure of the future then I have no doubt in my mind that ANZAC Day and what it means will endure the ages of time.

To capture the moment, I took a small video of the ODE being read, followed the last post and of the people who were present. It was still dark; the sun was still a few minutes away and still the glare from the RSL lights was enough to light up the area. At the end of the ceremony everyone was invited inside for a gunfire breakfast and to catch up with mates. Out of respect to the Watsonia RSL, I have included the ceremony within the article for the sake of history.

ANZAC DAY DAWN SERVICE 25th April 2022

ORDER OF SERVICE

I respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners of country through Victoria and pay respect to the ongoing cultures of the First Peoples.

The Watsonia RSL is proud to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land as the Wurundjeri William people and we pay respects to all Aboriginal Elders, past and present, who have resided in the area and have been an integral part of the region's history.

06.00 AM Commemoration Service commences

MC: Bill Wyndham

Councillor Elizabeth Nealy, Beal Ward, Mayor of Banyule Councillor Rick Garotti, Grimshaw City of Banyule, and senior Sergeant Howard Cornish

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, on behalf of Mr Jeffery Mawkes, President, and the Committee and Members of the Watsonia RSL, May I welcome you to the RSL Dawn Service, for Two Thousand and Twenty-Two.

This morning Mrs Lillian Smith President of the Watsonia Branch of Legacy, will present: The Lord's Prayer.

Lillian. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

MC: Introduction:

It is 107 years today, that the tradition of ANZAC was born on the 'bloody' beaches and hills of Gallipoli. Although the Gallipoli Campaign failed in its Military objectives, the actions of Australian and New Zealand Forces during the Campaign left a powerful legacy. It was a legacy that slowly evolved across the plains of Belgium and France. Until what became known as the 'ANZAC' legacy became an important part of the identity of both.

Today we come together as a free people to remember not only those who went ashore on that morning, and the legend they shaped. But we come together as a free people to remember the 102, 784 Australian Servicemen and Women who have paid the supreme price to protect our Freedom, our Liberty. Many words, many eloquent words have been spoken since then but few are as succinct as those of Captain Charles Bean and his 'ANZAC Requiem', or of David Delaney and his 'New Generation's Veterans'. May I introduce Jazz Burge of the Watsonia RSL Ceremonial Committee to recite Captain Bean's 'ANZAC Requiem'

THE ANZAC REQUIEM: - Jazz Burge. 'On this day, above all days, we remember those Australian men and women who died or suffered in the great tragedy of war. We recall staunch friends and allies, and especially those of the first ANZAC Day. May we and our successors prove worthy of their sacrifice'

MC. Thank you, Jazz. Just as Captain Bean spoke those who served in the First World War, David J. Delaney speaks of those who have served since then, World War 2, Malaya, Korea, Malaysia, and of the War that damaged our servicemen in ways that defy imagination - Vietnam. And more recently Iraq and the great tragedy that was Afghanistan.

NEW GENERATION VETERANS: - Maree Dennison. We honour our old veterans; we honour them with pride and read of all the horrors they have carried deep inside. I know on ANZAC Day, we will remember with a tear, but all vets young or old, they need our help throughout the year, support and listen to their stories, when they do get told, lets honour our new veterans, just like we do our old. **David J. Delaney**

MC: Thank you Maree. May I ask all who are not standing but who can, to stand for 'The Ode'. Which this morning will be read by Matt Stamp, Watsonia ceremonial committee. Then to remain standing for the Last post and Reveille, which in turn will be followed by the National Anthems of New Zealand and Australia, the words to which are in your program.

MC: Matt.

'The Ode' Matt Stamp

**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**

Audience response: "We will remember them"

Last Post: One minutes silence

Reveille:

MC: (Matt Stamp) "Lest we forget"

Audience response: "Lest we forget"

New Zealand National Anthem:

Australian National Anthem:

MC: That Ladies and Gentlemen concludes the Watsonia RSL Dawn Service for Two Thousand and Twenty-Two.

Acknowledgements The Watsonia RSL Sub Branch Inc. would like to thank the following for their participation in this morning's ceremony'

Piper: Ian Gray, **Readers:** Lillian Smith, Jazz Burge, Maree Dennison, Matt Stamp, **Flag Marshalls:** Gavin Burge, Tony Turtle, **Logistics Officer:** Brett Porter.

MC: Conclusion of ceremony. At this point I would remind you that the kitchen is open for the traditional 'Gun Fire' breakfast and invite you all to join us. Again, May I thank you for your attendance this morning.

Those in attendance slowly made their way towards the entrance, each taking their time given the many that had come this morning. I went over to the Master of ceremonies and spoke with him seeking to have a meeting with him after ANZAC Day to discuss the Hellenic ANZAC Memorial (HANZAC) in Greece.

The Master of Ceremonies having given me his speech and the procedure, I thanked him and returned back home to type upon today's ceremony and write down my thoughts.



When I arrived back home and opened the laptop, my thoughts went to the HANZAC Memorial in Greece where my cousin Kostas had cut the grass and cleaned the Memorial of foliage, being careful to leave the red poppies that had been planted by me some five years ago. These poppies have since been self-seeding every year and the memorial is ablaze with the poppies and other flowers.

When my friends and Guardians of the memorial wake, (Some seven hours difference) they will make their way to the HANZAC Memorial and repeat the Ode in Greek, lay two wreaths, to represent the ANZACs and the other to represent the Spartans who fell at Thermopylae some 2400 years ago.

I am hoping to capture the moment using the security cameras installed. A few members have access to the cameras and I am sure that they too will be observing the small ceremony at Pellana, Laconia, some 25 kilometres from ancient Sparta. Pellana was the original capital of Laconia before the arrival and development of the Spartans and Pellana is considered the home of Helen of Troy. I shall write a separate article on the HANZAC Memorial commemoration later in the day.

As always, remain vigilant, stay strong, fight the good fight and never give up. The challenges of life only make us stronger. May we all have a great year. Lest we forget.



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