



## Anthony Parissis Anzac Day address at the Dawn Service at Chatswood

Early before dawn, on the morning of April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1915, 16 000 Australian and New Zealanders, along with their British, French and Indian brothers landed at ANZAC Cove on the Gallipoli peninsula.

A strategic campaign to gain access to the Ottoman capital of Constantinople as well as the rest of the Dardanelles, the chance at success here meant that the Ottoman Empire might be forced out of the war, and Germany would lose a vital ally.

On this very day, some 2000 Australians were killed or wounded, and over the course of the following eight months, the campaign would prove itself to be a stalemate.

The final casualty count, 8700 Australians.

The ANZAC landing at Gallipoli, being one of Australia's most commemorated military campaigns is a tale of selflessness and courage. It's a reminder of our strong and deep-rooted unity and the ubiquity and richness of multiculturalism in our nation.

It's a reminder to the world that we're proud. That we're legitimate. And most of all, that we are Australian.

Though the anniversary of this campaign, today we commemorate all Australians who have served.





# ST PIUS X COLLEGE

## CHATSWOOD

I want to particularly commemorate Albert Chowne, a Willoughby boy and Victoria Cross recipient, who enlisted at the age of 19 in the Second Australian Imperial Force during the Second World War.

Albert Chowne was born in Sydney on 19 July 1920, the son of Arthur, a grocer, and Frances Chowne. He was one of seven children. Albert attended Chatswood Boys Intermediate High School and Naremburn Junior Technical School.

Before the war Chowne worked as a shirt-cutter for David Jones. A member of the 36th Battalion of the Militia, Chowne enlisted in the Second Australian Imperial Force in May 1940. His address was given as Chaley Street Willoughby.

As part of the 20th Brigade of the Australian 9th Division, Chowne embarked for overseas service with the 2/13th Battalion in 1940, arriving in the Middle East in November and serving at the siege of Tobruk in 1941

The following year at El Alamein, he became wounded. By now he had been promoted to sergeant and begun to forge a reputation as a strong and brave leader.

In January 1943 the 9th Division returned to Australia, before being sent to Papua, and in September of that same year, Chowne was awarded the Military Medal.

Back in Australia he began officer training, and in January 1944 was promoted to lieutenant. After completing his jungle warfare training in Queensland, the newly commissioned Chowne was posted to the 2/2nd Battalion, part of the 6th Australian Division.

Chowne was just 24 years old when he was killed in action on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March 1945, during the coastal advance towards Wewak.

Leading his platoon up a steep narrow trail, Chowne had launched a charge upon a heavily defended enemy position. Throwing hand grenades and firing his sub-machine gun, he knocked out two enemy positions before being shot twice in the chest. He nevertheless managed to continue his advance, killing two more enemy soldiers in their foxholes before being killed under a hail of heavy fire.

His advance enabled his platoon to continue the attack and take the position. For his action Chowne was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross and he was buried at the Lae War Cemetery.





# ST PIUS X COLLEGE

## CHATSWOOD

A Gordon Rugby boy and Local Scout, The Lieutenant Albert Chowne Memorial Hall in his home suburb of Willoughby was opened in 1954 as part of Willoughby Park to acknowledge his deep connection to his home. A street in the Canberra suburb of Campbell is also named in his honour.

He – like his forefathers in the First World War – is an embodiment of all things Australian. Courage, mateship, humility. He is truly, perpetually an Australian hero.

Only a month prior to the landing at Gallipoli, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 1915, the first ANZAC troops arrived in Moudros Harbour, a small seaside village on the North Aegean Greek Island of Lemnos.

Of course, the ANZAC campaign was fiercely supported by the Greek government in the face of a common Ottoman enemy, and the proximity of the island to the Gallipoli peninsula offered the optimal location for a base that could facilitate the invasion.

Lemnos wasn't just the point of departure for the ANZAC troops during the Gallipoli campaign, it became a logistic base, with supply units, reinforcement camps and hospitals.

Logistics though, ironically were, as many soldiers articulated, poorly organised. Troops from Lemnos and the adjacent base on the island of Imbros joked that they were Lemnos, Imbros and Chaos.

The hospitality of the Greeks, however, certainly did not go unnoticed by our ANZACs, even after the landing at Gallipoli on April 25<sup>th</sup>. 300 Cretan guerrilla soldiers under the Command of Pavlos Gyparis attacked the Gulf of Saros on Gallipoli in August in order to create a diversion to lure the Ottomans. This effort eventually resulted in a coincidence with the Australian's 1st Brigade assault on Lone Pine.

Demetri Passa was also a born Lemnian, who fought alongside our ANZACs in France, and Private John Simpson was assisted by a trusty, beautiful Lemnian donkey, helping him save over 300 wounded soldiers at ANZAC Cove.

The significance of this small, relatively unnoticed island spans far beyond the Gallipoli campaign. This brief wartime relationship has fostered the strongest, most unbreakable of bonds between Australia and Greece that has endured the ages.

The story of Lemnos unites Greek Australians like my family and acts as a reminder of a rich and beautiful fusion of heritage and culture that comprises modern Australia.

My papou as well as my yiayia's mother, are both Lemnian men and women. When my yiayia fled her village of Koutali in Lemnos during the Nazi occupation of Greece in WWII, she had only one destination in mind.

A land of promise, a land of opportunity. A land of freedom. Australia quickly became her home. Her, along with her husband who had served in the English Army in Egypt were granted a new chapter – a chance to start over.



Today, our very own Melbourne is home to the largest ethnic Greek population in the world outside of Athens.

This acts as testament to the fact that many others like my yiayia have seen the vast potential of this great country over the years in providing a future, in providing hope that the safety of their children's children could be guaranteed. These are attributes that my yiayia's humble seaside village, in all its beauty could never offer her.

That's what this country is. A refuge, a beautiful fusion of cultures and a home to their diasporas. The sons and daughters of migrants, the great grandchildren of those who landed on those very Turkish shores on the 25<sup>th</sup> of April, united on the golden soil, beneath the radiance of our Southern Cross.

Today, the port of Moudros facilitates an ANZAC War Memorial and Cemetery, where 148 Australians and 76 New Zealand soldiers – more than 220 ANZACs in total – lay to rest upon the shores, looking out into the Aegean for ages to come.

We've gracefully reciprocated the hospitality Lemnos offered us during the war, by naming a suburb in Australia's very own 'Little Athens', Melbourne after the island.

ANZAC Day is a time to remember just how far we've come. As a nation, how we've come to embrace diversity, especially in commemoration of our some 1000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers who served in the First World War.

We thank all those who have fought for their own countries, who now call Australia home. To the Lemnian Greeks for their hospitality, those brave young men and women who ventured into foreign territory in 1915, and those who now lay to rest forever in the Mediterranean.

For all men and women who have served – we thank you.

From the plateaus of Afghanistan to the Persian Gulf, from Syria, to Iraq, Vietnam, Papua New Guinea, Egypt, France, Belgium and Greece – to all those who have served this country with the aim of preserving its rich culture and opportunity, ANZAC Day is not a glorification or a celebration of war, it is a commemoration of you.

On this Anzac Day, we now remember Lieutenant Albert Chowne VC, and all of those Australians who come from all walks of life – as well as our allies and brothers in arms – who gave their lives for their nation.

**Με τη δύση του ήλιου και το πρωί  
Θα τους θυμόμαστε.**

At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them.

**Lest we forget.**