

ANZAC DAY 2011

A TIME TO REMEMBER; AND A TIME TO LEARN

My wife and I have served in Holroyd for over 30 years. We count it a privilege to be here, and to reflect on some of the values that our Australian way has been built upon –especially today the principles of **sacrifice for the benefit of others**, and of **respect for others different from ourselves**.

I participate today as a representative of the Christian faith and have been asked to lead a **prayer for peace** at this point in the Order of Service. I wish to put some meat on what has become a rather vague concept, before praying. Please bear with me....

The Founder of the Christian Faith, Lord Jesus Christ, died and rose again in the cause of **peace and reconciliation**. How appropriate that this year the great festival of Easter overlaps ANZAC Day.

(Isa 11:6-7) (under His reign) *the wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox.* Hostile personalities will learn to coexist peacefully....

(Eph 2:13-14) *But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For **He himself is our peace**, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility....*

These writers saw that where Jesus Christ takes up rulership, **peace** between warring people(s) can emerge. They also saw this would not be completely fulfilled until He comes in glory and His kingdom reigns on Earth.

In the dying days of the Ottoman Empire in Turkey, the Ottoman rulers commissioned a general to repel the foreign invaders of their country from the Dardanelles – the key to the seaway connecting Russia and Europe. His name was **Mustafa Kemal Atatürk**, and he was a master tactician. After the ANZAC troops landed at what is now called ANZAC Cove – a tiny strip of beach – the men fought their way up the ridges until they secured Lone Pine Ridge.

The Ottomans launched a major assault on May 19 — 42,000 Ottomans attacked 17,000 Australians and New Zealanders (the Turks called them “Johnnies”) — but the attack miscarried. When it was over the Ottomans had suffered about 13,000 casualties, of which 3,000 were killed. In comparison, the Australian casualties were 160 killed and 468 wounded. The Ottoman losses were so severe that a truce was organized by General Herbert and others in order to bury the large numbers of dead lying in no man's land. **This momentary contact led to a strange camaraderie between the warring armies** (much like the Christmas truce of 1914 in Europe).

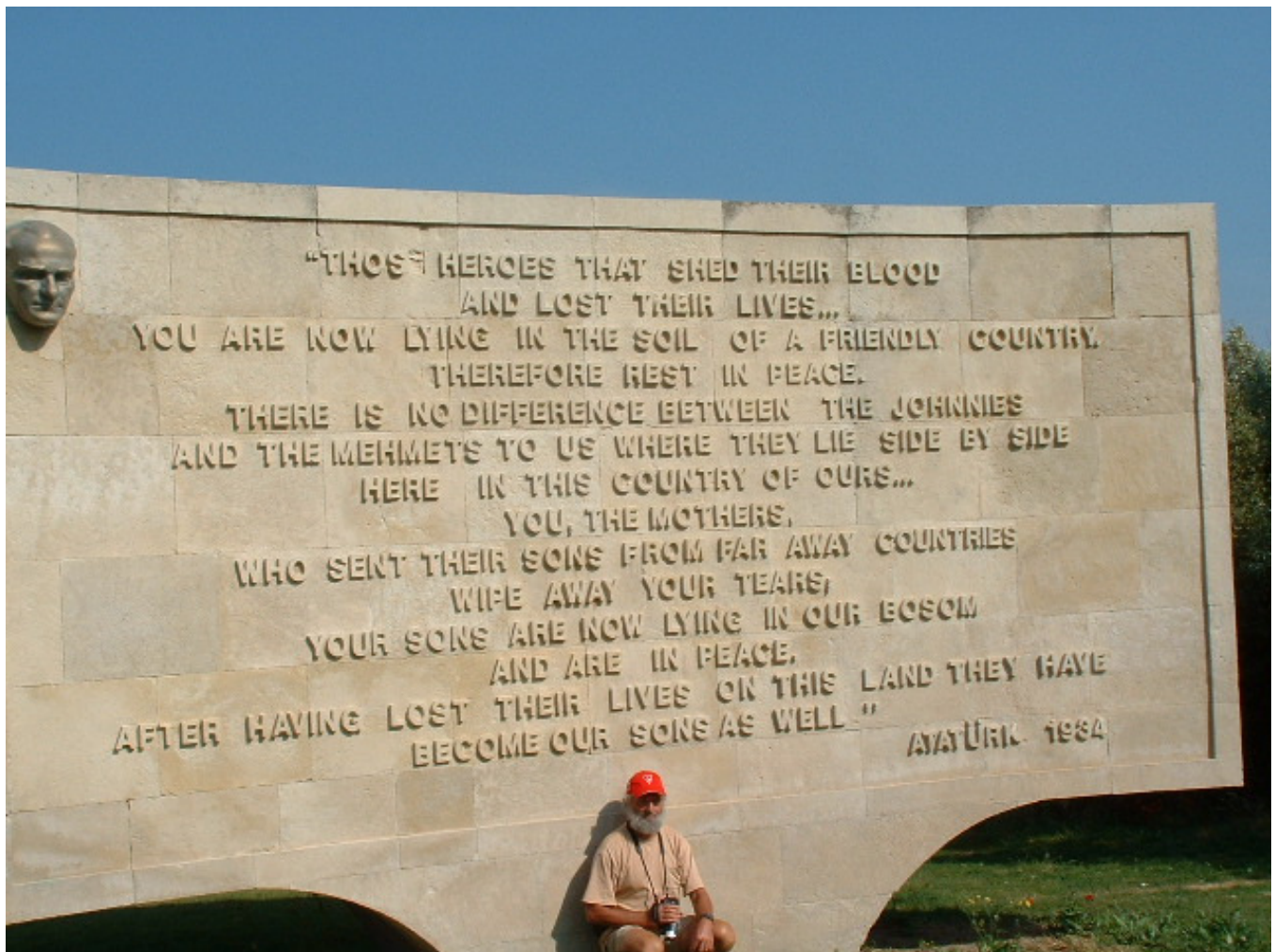
Inertia set in. One old Ottoman batman was regularly permitted to hang his platoon's washing on the barbed wire without attracting fire, and that there was a "constant traffic" of gifts being thrown across no-man's land: dates and sweets from the Ottoman side, and cans of beef and cigarettes from the Allied side.

The NZ battalion went on further up the ridges from Lone Pine and reached Chunuk Bair, at the very top of the Gallipoli Peninsula - from which you can see down into the Dardanelles. They held it for only two days. *(pic shows how close they were in battle>>>)* Kemal Atatürk was shot in the chest, and only lived because the bullet hit a metal tin in his chest pocket. After he was wounded, Atatürk rallied his Turkish soldiers (nicknamed “Mehmets”) and pushed the New Zealanders back down the ridge. From that point on, the invasion campaign was doomed to failure.

In 1923 Atatürk became the President of the new Turkish Republic. During his



Presidency, he erected a large memorial at ANZAC Cove with the following words inscribed (about his “enemies”).... ***“Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives... You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mahomet's to us where they lie side by side now here in this country of ours... you, the mothers, who sent their sons from faraway countries - wipe away your tears; your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land, they have become our sons as well.”***



Elizabeth and I stood alone at ANZAC Cove 7 years ago when we read these words. I wept unashamedly, as I considered the spirit of peace and reconciliation behind these greatly honouring words. Written about men who had been his enemies! And they are echoed by a 50m-high sign etched into the



hills opposite Canakkale – reminding all visitors approaching the Gallipoli Peninsula that they are treading on sacred soil, drenched with blood, and to tread respectfully.

The name derives from the Greek: *Kallipolis*, meaning "Beautiful City". How appropriate....

May such a spirit of peace and reconciliation grip our minds and hearts in our day. And may the One who was declared 2000 years ago to be “our peace” fill us and guide us to such a place of conciliatory attitude towards our enemies – both personal and corporate.

“Those who don't learn from history are condemned to repeat it” (George Santayana

1905). **LEST WE FORGET.....**