

Solemn Gallipoli anniversary



Gallipoli veterans assembled at Lone Pine - photo courtesy of Department of Defence Public Relations

THE 75th Anniversary of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps landings at Anzac Cove on 25 April this year saw a cloudy dawn reveal the steep ridges and gullies of the infamous Sphinx, Shrapnel Valley, Lone Pine and The Nek form an impressive backdrop for the dawn service.

Off the coast, a number of warships and submarines rode at anchor on calm grey seas. Situated between the beach and ridges at Ari Burnu Cemetery, a crowd of about 10,000 people, predominately Australians and New Zealanders, stood silently to witness a once-in-a-lifetime event.

For the 59 World War 1 veterans who attended the ceremony, the stark contrast of this day compared to the original landings in 1915 must have been dramatic.

Hundreds of young backpackers, families, war veterans, service personnel and their Turkish hosts stood in the chill

Superintendent Bob Bradley, travelled from Cyprus to represent the AFP at the ANZAC Day service on Gallipoli.

of dawn to salute those original Anzacs and to pay homage to the 503,309 soldiers who were killed and injured on both sides during those terrible eight months.

The Memorial Service, attended by the Governor General of New Zealand, the Most Rev. Sir Paul Reeves, GCMG, GCVO, and the Prime Minister of Australia, the Honorable Bob Hawke, AC, and other VIPs, provided both a touch of sadness and a deep sense of national pride as the National Anthems of Australia and New Zealand were played.

Following the Dawn Service and an international ceremony on the toe of the

Gallipoli Peninsula, a wreath-laying ceremony was held at the Lone Pine Cemetery, the principle Australian memorial.

During the ceremony, the Prime Minister paid tribute to the attending veterans and those who did not return to their families in Australia.

While there were many memorable scenes, perhaps the greatest moment of the day saw the crowd in attendance, particularly the younger generations, give a standing ovation to the veterans departing the service.

Barely a dry eye could be found among the people present as they saw the old lads being wheeled or assisted by service personnel from the scene.

For us from Cyprus and our visiting military friends from Lebanon, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Sinai and Namibia, the day's ceremonies and later social events provided a great opportunity for a genuine Aussie reunion which will not be forgotten.