

ANZAC DAY 2006
HOKITIKA ADDRESS

Introduction:

Good morning to you all and welcome to this commemorative ANZAC Day service. I feel privileged to be asked to address you today by Mr Brian McCarthy and Lyall DeLore of the Hokitika RSA and acknowledge their Patron, Mr John Hurren. In 1960 I left Hokitika as a 19 year old to join the regular force army and subsequently served 30 years in the infantry.

On this special day New Zealand citizens come together at commemorative services such as this, to pay their respects, and to remember all servicemen and servicewomen, who paid the supreme sacrifice during the many overseas conflicts that our country has been involved in, over 100 years. It is also an opportunity to acknowledge the commitment and contribution all servicemen and servicewomen have made to ensure the security of this great country of ours.

Background:

ANZAC Day originates from a campaign during WW1 that was an Allied attack on Turkey, a German ally, on the Gallipoli Peninsula. The combined forces of Australia and NZ, fighting as part of the Australian and NZ Army Corps, ANZAC, played an important part in the campaign. Although ANZAC Day, the anniversary of the first day of the battle, does not mark a military triumph it does remind us of a very important episode in NZ history.

World War 2 was the last occasion NZ formally declared war and conscripted its citizens to fight in a war. Since then our service men and women have served in many conflicts, emergencies, and peace keeping operations. They have been involved in deployments to Korea, Malaya, Borneo, Viet Nam, Bosnia, the Persian Gulf, East Timor, Bougainville, Afghanistan, the Middle East, Africa and last week to the Solomon Islands. These varied deployments, some of which are still in progress, attest to the ongoing impact and significance of our Armed Forces.

Today I intend to speak about these deployments concentrating on the involvement of the Army. Both the Royal NZ Navy and Royal NZ Air Force were involved in many of these conflicts and are still involved in some of the current deployments. I hope I am able to convey to you that for a small country with a small military force we continue to be actively involved in world affairs. Our military forces are much sought after by the United Nations, and our allies, because of their military professionalism and versatility.

After WW2 the lessons learned from our army's involvement in the African, Italian and Pacific campaigns was documented and incorporated into our military manuals. The re-establishment of the Territorial Force and the introduction of Compulsory Military Training produced well trained part-time soldiers. Veterans from WW2 who had transferred to the regular force and territorial force assumed the critical training and command appointments for Army units. It is important to acknowledge the role veterans have played in our armed forces and over the years they have provided maturity and stability. Their military knowledge has ensured appropriate training has been conducted prior to each overseas deployment and there have been veterans in ALL overseas contingents since the Boer War. The experience and leadership of our veterans has been an important factor in maintaining the outstanding reputation established at Gallipoli.

Our initial Korean War deployment, called Kayforce, included artillery and transport units and they joined the American led 15 nation United Nation Force serving with the Commonwealth Brigade in the British Division. The invasion of South Korea by the communist state of North Korea was the first conflict between freeworld

countries and communist countries. As the war progressed armoured, infantry and signal personnel were deployed and served with British and Australian units.

In the mid fifties our commitment to the Malayan Emergency coincided with a government decision to deploy regular force units and the formation of these units changed the structure and role of the infantry dramatically. Responding to a request for assistance from the British government a Special Air Service unit was formed and deployed to serve with British and Malayan forces fighting a jungle war against communist guerrillas. The Special Air Services were replaced by an infantry battalion which came under command of the Commonwealth Brigade serving alongside British and Australian battalions. The deployment of an infantry battalion to Malaya, initiated a decision to maintain a NZ military presence in SE Asia, which was to continue until the Battalion returned to NZ after 32 years continuous overseas service. In total 16 Battalions recruited and trained their Regular Force and Territorial Force volunteers in Burnham, prior to 2 years service in South East Asia. For the first time families of officers and non commissioned officers were able to accompany their husbands on these deployments.

The Indonesian Confrontation on the newly formed State of Malaysia commenced with Indonesian soldiers attacking Malaysian Forces in Borneo. As military activities increased the Malay based Battalion and a Special Air Services detachment were deployed to join the Commonwealth Brigade in Borneo. As had been the case during the Malayan Emergency operations were mainly deep jungle patrols serving alongside British, Gurkha, Australian and Malaysian forces.

Our first commitments to the Vietnam War were made by Medical, Engineer and Artillery units, who joined an American led multi-national force involving 11 countries, to assist the South Vietnamese forces fight against the communist North Vietnamese.

Initially the artillery and engineer units were positioned in support of an American Brigade. Once the Australian Task Force was positioned the artillery joined them and the engineer unit returned to NZ. Two Infantry rifle companies, from the Malayan based battalion and a Special Air Services detachment, were deployed to South Vietnam and joined the Australian Task Force. The two rifle companies combined with a designated Australian Battalion and became the ANZAC Battalion. During the war opportunities for operational experience with allied units was available for our servicemen and individual attachments occurred.

Following the withdrawal of NZ military personnel from Vietnam our armed forces, particularly the army, began a period of restructuring and retraining. NZ however was still very active in providing military personnel for deployment with the United Nations and this involvement has seen NZ servicemen and servicewomen serve in many countries in the last 50 years. Selected army units were deployed to Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, to monitor the ceasefire at the cessation of the guerrilla war and to Bosnia in support of the British security forces. UN border monitoring missions have been a constant source to gain valuable military experience for both RF and TF officers. The last 20 years our commitment to UN missions has seen much larger units being deployed. Infantry units deployed for service in Bougainville and the Solomon's.

NZ forces joined the International Force East Timor, a multinational force of 22 nations, serving alongside countries from SE Asia, the Pacific, Australia, United States, United Kingdom, Canada and France. The deployment to East Timor, to assist in the establishment of a free independent country, was NZ largest military operation since the Korean War and included a considerable number of servicewomen. It is worthy of note that the West Coast provided a high number of Territorial Force soldiers for service in East Timor.

NZ's mobilization of more than 225,000 men and women for service overseas to both world wars was extraordinary and something all New Zealanders should be proud of.

Since WW2 deployments of much smaller units has resulted in a reduction of the number of servicemen and servicewomen mobilized and approximately 35000 soldiers have been involved. NZ service personnel have been sent to trouble spots all over the world and these deployments have included full scale wars through to monitoring peace procedures. Be assured our servicemen and women have applied themselves fully to each deployment and all of them have endeavoured to maintain the outstanding reputation that their predecessors established.

Today as we attend ANZAC Day services New Zealand servicemen and servicewomen are still on duty serving overseas with the United Nations in the following countries:

SOLOMON ISLANDS, IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, EAST TIMOR, BOUGAINVILLE, SIERRA LEONE, BOSNIA, CROATIA, KOSOVO, SINAI, ISRAEL, LEBANON, SYRIA, CAMBODIA, MOZAMBIQUE.

2006 is the 90th anniversary of the Royal NZ RSA and today's ex-servicemen and servicewomen are grateful for the foresight of those WW1 veterans in establishing an organisation, to look after their mates, who were still recovering from the effects of the war. This voluntary welfare system was an excellent initiative and is still performing a much appreciated service today for veterans and serving military personnel.

This year is also the Year of the Veteran which is a Government sponsored initiative in recognition of the contribution made to our country by the service and sacrifice of our veterans. The key aim of the programme is to provide opportunities for veterans to be recognised in their own communities. To assist that, the government has established a one million dollar, contestable Community Grants Fund. The programme also wishes to recognise those members of our communities who have done outstanding volunteer work for veterans such as welfare work and maintenance of cemeteries and memorials.

On a personal note I readily acknowledge the advantages of growing up in Hokitika and the influence teachers and youth group leaders had to my military career. We were fortunate, in the 50's, to have WW2 veterans as school teachers, sport participation was encouraged and learning the value of teamwork was stressed. Membership of Lifeboys, Boys Brigade and school cadets introduced us to activities that gave us an opportunity to do things that we might not otherwise have done and acquainted us with the value of discipline.

Thank you Hokitika for doing this day justice by attending this service and it is wonderful to see so many young people present. I have to say to you that the furthest thing from my mind when I attended ANZAC Day Services as a schoolboy was that one day I would be back as the Guest Speaker.

Finally can I remind you:

**IT IS THE SOLDIER NOT THE REPORTER,
WHO HAS GIVEN US FREEDOM OF THE PRESS.**

**IT IS THE SOLDIER NOT THE POET,
WHO HAS GIVEN US FREEDOM OF SPEECH.**

**IT IS THE SOLDIER NOT THE UNION ORGANISER,
WHO HAS GIVEN US FREEDOM TO DEMONSTRATE.**

**IT IS THE SOLDIER WHO SALUTES THE FLAG,
WHO SERVES BENEATH THE FLAG AND,
WHOSE COFFIN IS DRAPED BY THE FLAG,
WHO ALLOWS THE PROTESTER TO BURN THE FLAG.**

LEST WE FORGET