

On this day, one hundred and three years ago, Australian and New Zealand forces landed on the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey.

They formed part of an expeditionary force with British, French, Indian and Newfoundlander troops.

Their mission was to seize the Gallipoli Peninsula in order to suppress the Ottoman defences guarding the Dardanelles.

They landed on the beach in the pre-dawn darkness and were immediately fired upon from the cliffs above. In the ensuing confusion thousands were wounded and hundreds were killed including 754 Australians and 147 New Zealanders on that one day.

It marked the beginning of an intense eight month-long campaign during which more than 8,000 Australians and 2,700 New Zealanders lost their lives.

In those terrible months, the ANZACs forged a reputation for courage in adversity and dedication to duty. For self-sacrifice and for taking care of each other: what we call mateship.

Australians and New Zealanders have fought side by side ever since.

But perhaps the greatest threat to us came from the unchecked advance of the Japanese forces through the South West Pacific in World War II.

In 1942, the conflict came to our doorstep and the battles that took place in the Pacific, such as the Battle of the Coral Sea in May, were crucial to defending our territory.

It was collective action and determination that allowed us to end that year in hope rather than disaster.

That forged alliances that remain strong to this day.

And that remind us that our way of life and freedoms should never be taken for granted.

That defending them has required great sacrifice.

We give thanks to the people of the Pacific, including members of the then New Hebrides Defence Force, for their support to the allied efforts to defend the region. We honour their bravery during those dark years.

During a recent trip to Santo, I had the pleasure of visiting the site of the future World War II museum in Luganville. It's a reminder of the contribution that this country and its people made to make our region safe and keep it free.

This year we celebrate 35 years of defence cooperation between Australia and Vanuatu. To mark the occasion we have with us today members of Australia's Federation Guard.

The Federation Guard represents the three arms of the Australian Defence Forces: Navy, Army and Air Force. Today they proudly stand with their Pacific brothers and sisters in the three arms of the Vanuatu Police Force: the police, the mobile force and the maritime wing.

I am also pleased to welcome to this ANZAC service Venturers and Rovers from the 2nd Baulkham Hills Scout Group in Sydney. They, along with all young Australians and Zealanders here today, will be the next generation to walk in the footsteps of the legendary ANZACs and to carry forward their memory and their spirit.

Around the world communities are gathering together, as we are, in commemorative services to mark this ANZAC Day.

In France, in the village of Villers-Bretonneux, Australia's Prime Minister will join the Prime Minister of France to officially open the Sir John Monash Centre; a new museum honouring the Australians who served on the Western Front during the First World War, and to mark one hundred years since Australian troops bravely led a counter attack to successfully defend the village and beat back the Germans.

Today we honour the men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice. The last post sounds for each one of them.

We remember men and women who are currently serving in theatres of conflict and in peacekeeping operations.

We remember those whom they have left at home.

And we remember those who have been and will forever be scarred by war. Like Sapper Curtis McGrath, who lost his legs to an Improvised Explosive Device in Afghanistan.

In his words:

"On ANZAC Day we look back on a century of courage, endurance, mateship and sacrifice. We honour those who have died and suffered through the old and new wars. And we thank them for all they have ingrained in our nation's heart and way of life."

Lest we forget.