

BLUE BERET



Dawn Service at Wayne's Keep commemorates Anzac Day

Anzac Day, commemorated annually on 25 April, is one of Australia's most important national occasions. It marks the anniversary of the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during the First World War. In 1915, Australian and New Zealand soldiers formed part of the expedition that set out to capture the Gallipoli peninsula in order to open the Dardanelles to the allied navies. The Australian and New Zealand forces landed on Gallipoli on 25 April.

But Anzac Day goes beyond the anniversary of the landing on Gallipoli in 1915. It is the day on which we remember all Australians who served and died in war and on operational service. In 1916, the first Anzac Day commemorations were held on 25 April. The day was marked by a wide variety of ceremonies and services across Australia, a march through London, and a sports day in the Australian camp in Egypt.

Nowadays, Australians recognise 25 April as a day of national remembrance, which takes two forms. Commemorative services are held across the nation at dawn – the time of the original landing, while later in the day, former servicemen and servicewomen meet to take part in marches through the country's major cities and in many smaller centres.

UNFICYP has commemorated Anzac Day for many years; this year, Australian UNPOL personnel invited UNFICYP personnel, ambassadors and military attachés to Wayne's Keep Military Cemetery in Nicosia, for a commemorate dawn service. The service was led by the Reverend Stephen McCaulay C.F., and was followed by a prayer for Australia and for a New Zealand.

The congregation sang Amazing Grace as the sun rose. Following remarks by His Excellency Mr. Alan Sweetman, the Australian High Commissioner, read out his commemorative address; subsequently, the guests, among them UNFICYP Head of Mission Ms. Lisa Buttenheim and Chief of Staff Colonel Tim Wildish, laid wreaths at the Cross of Sacrifice in honour of those who paid the ultimate price in the service of peace. The ceremony was closed with the reverend's blessing and the traditional New Zealand love song, Pokarekare Ana, written in the native Māori language and sang by Ms. Kate Cammell.



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