



PRIME MINISTER

ANZAC OPEN AIR SERVICE

CONCORD, N.S.W.

23 April, 1972.

Speech by the Prime Minister, the Rt Hon. William McMahon, CH, MP.

Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are here to honor those who died in war and to commemorate Anzac Day, one of the notable anniversaries in our history. Anzac has become a symbol of a nation's valor in war. It has become a symbol of "mateship", and it has become a symbol of the bond which unites us with our New Zealand comrades across the Tasman. All these thoughts are with us today.

Though the forms of observance have changed, the day itself has an immortal place in the Australian story. It is my hope that the younger generation, as it grows to manhood, will not forget what my generation so well remembers. For we remember that it was on the beaches and hills of Gallipoli that our own created an image and tradition that is imperishable. They made a name that every civilian respects. We loathe war: Its brutality, its tragedy and its waste. But we also cherish our inheritance, freedom and liberty. Without these freedoms we would not be here in these gardens today. That is why the originals fought at Gallipoli. That is why Australia has always been in the fight for freedom - through two world wars, in Korea, Malaysia and in Vietnam. We were born free; not by the accident of history; but by the determined will of the Australian people and the courage of its fighting forces. You may say: "That experts tell us that there's no major threat to Australia in sight in the next few years. "Why then" - they ask - "Do we spend so much money on defence, why do we call-up some of our young men?". "Why are soldiers and sailors and airmen in Malaysia and Singapore?" The answer is simple; because we must be prepared. We have to demonstrate to all, that like the Anzacs, we are ready to stand with them, and if necessary, to fight with them. We have to remind a would-be aggressor that - like the Anzacs - we are ready to fight tooth and nail for freedom and the defence of our own country: It is better to prevent wars.

The international bully will always think twice if he knows the other fellow - big or small - is in fighting trim and packs a pretty heavy punch.

.../2

There was a phrase used during the first world war. "This is the war to end all wars". Unhappily, it was not. But out of the sacrifice of those dreadful years freedom was preserved for decent people. Freedom was won; it was not guaranteed. It is up to us and our allies to do all we can - now - to provide the guarantees. Freedom was again challenged in the second world war: again the challenge was beaten. It is being challenged again in South-East Asia. That battle is still being fought; so the need for a guarantee remains. That is why we must be strong. That is why, we must prepare for war in the years of peace. Never in our history has an aggressor set foot on Australian soil. But hostile aircraft bombed us in the north and we had enemy submarines in Sydney Harbor. It has been as close as that. Don't let us live in a "fool's paradise": We must not take risks. We must keep faith with the tradition of Anzac.

I am proud to say that the vast majority of Australians are keeping the faith. The young Australians who have served or are serving under the National Service Scheme are Anzacs through and through. There are no differences, nor distinction; between them and the regular soldier. They have been decorated in battle in Vietnam. They have served with courage. Ladies and Gentlemen on this Anzac Sunday our memories are with those who died on the land, on the sea, and in the air. We will never forget them. Our thoughts, too, are for their families. It is with humility and gratitude that we honor the Anzac today - and we pledge ourselves that - so far as it is within our mortal power - to carry on in their tradition. "What they have left to us would enrich the proudest nation on earth." I thank you.
