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PRIME MINISTER

CANBERRA

**THE CRETAN ASSOCIATION OF SYDNEY AND NSW: BATTLE OF CRETE
COMMEMORATION**

Fifty-two years ago, Greek and Commonwealth forces, including 6,500 Australians, fought to defend Crete from German invasion. Today, we remember the sacrifices made by Australians and Cretans in that bitterly fought campaign.

Without heavy equipment or air support, exhausted from the campaign in Greece, the Allied troops in Crete nevertheless inflicted heavy casualties on the German forces. When resistance finally ceased, the people of Crete risked savage retaliation to help Allied soldiers evade capture. In the weeks following the battle, more than 300 Australians, aided by Cretans, succeeded in escaping. Hundreds of other Australians and New Zealanders were hidden by Cretans.

Australians have not forgotten the courage of these Cretans.

The ties forged in war have endured and grown. After ~~the~~ World War Two, more than 250,000 Greeks, including many Cretans, migrated to Australia. They brought with them an ancient culture and a spirit of enterprise which has enriched Australian society immensely.

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Thus, when we remember today the sacrifices of 1941, we reaffirm the enduring ties between Australia and Crete, ties built on a common democratic heritage tested in war and peace.

(16 May 1993) ?

P J KEATING

T. WILSON
TDALN

→ PMO 30.4.93