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## PRIME MINISTER

### **SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING, MP OPENING OF HEROES WALK, TOWNSVILLE, 14 AUGUST 1995**

\*\*\*CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY\*\*\*

Con Sciacca, Councilor Tony Mooney and Mrs Mooney, Keith Payne VC and Don Starceovich, son of Private Leslie Starceovich VC, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

I'm delighted to be in Anzac Park this morning to open this Heroes Walk.

During the *Australia Remembers* year, we have remembered the efforts of the World War Two generation of Australians. We have remembered those who worked on the homefront as well as those who served on the battlefield.

But this memorial honours the bravest of the brave.

It honours the twenty Australians who received the nation's highest honour for valour during the WWII - the Victoria Cross - and especially the twelve recipients who fought in the Pacific War.

They gave their all in defence of this country - and many of them gave their lives.

Today we pay tribute to people of rare quality - men of great courage and resourcefulness and sustained by their belief in Australia.

Men like Corporal Jack French from Crows Nest, near Toowoomba, who overcame three Japanese machine gun nests at Milne Bay before succumbing.

Or Private Richard Kelliher, who enlisted in the 2nd AIF in Brisbane, who silenced a machine gun post at Lae and saved his wounded section commander.

It is to these men - and all their comrades - that we pay tribute today.

I know that Keith Payne VC from the Vietnam War is here - and we acknowledge his great service to Australia.

The winners of the Victoria Cross are surely all heroes. But all of Australia's fighting men and women of World War Two - and the millions of Australians who stood behind them - deserve the title too.

We remember them all - as heroes.

Thank you.